Commentary
Volume Fifty-Two, Number Four, October 1971

America after Vietnam

Edmund Stillman

From an Israeli Diary
Walter Laqueur

Apocalyptic Thinking
Samuel McCracken

Literature and Crisis
Robert Alter

A Story
Alan Goldfein

Family Fever Chart
Sonya Rudikoff

The Real Grandees
Edouard Roditi

Doomsday Fears & Modern Life • Norman Podhoretz

Books in Review

Stanley M. Elkins / Irving Howe / John Thompson / David M. Oshinsky

Published by the American Jewish Committee / One Dollar

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In all the 1970's, this will be the unique American car. The Continental Mark IV.

For 1972, a new Mark. Evolutionary changes in the grille. A longer, lower hood. More ample room inside. Still America's fully equipped luxury car: Sure-Track braking, all-weather Michelin tires, Automatic Temperature Control, and Cartier timepiece. Continental. The final step up.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

370. Pub price **$20**

351. INSIDE THE THIRD REICH: Memoirs by Albert Speer. Photos (Pub list price **$12.50**)

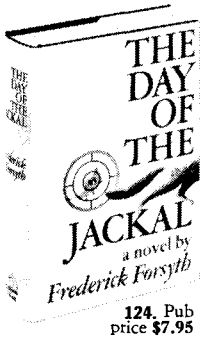
130. THE GRAHAM KERR COOKBOOK *by* THE GALLOPING GOURMET Photographs (Pub list price **$7.95**)

147. MYSELF AMONG OTHERS *by* RUTH GORDON (Pub list price **$10**)

118. THE SAN FRANCISCO EARTHQUAKE *by* GORDON THOMAS *and* MAX MORGAN WITTS Photographs (Pub list price **$7.95**)

531. KHRUSHCHEV REMEMBERS *Translated and edited by* STROBE TALBOTT. Notes by EDWARD CRANKSHAW Photographs (Pub list price **$10**)

160. A SORT OF LIFE *by* GRAHAM GREENE (Pub list price **$6.95**)



124. Pub price **$7.95**

123. CRISIS IN THE CLASSROOM *by* CHARLES E. SILBERMAN (Pub list price **$10**)

114. EINSTEIN The Life and Times *by* RONALD W. CLARK Photographs (Pub list price **$15**)

162. KENT STATE What Happened and Why *by* JAMES A. MICHENER Photographs (Pub list price **$10**)

302. ISLANDS IN THE STREAM *by* ERNEST HEMINGWAY (Pub list price **$10**)

140. THE COMPLETE MEDICAL GUIDE *by* BENJAMIN F. MILLER, M.D. 3rd Revised edition Illustrated (Pub list price **$9.95**)

AN INVITATION TO READERS

who may have considered membership in the

BOOK-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB®

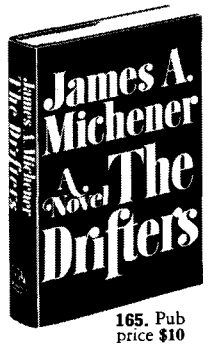
CHOOSE ANY FOUR

of the books shown on this page

FOR ONLY $1

IN A SHORT EXPERIMENTAL SUBSCRIPTION

You simply agree to buy four additional Club Selections or Alternates within twelve months at special members' prices



165. Pub price **$10**

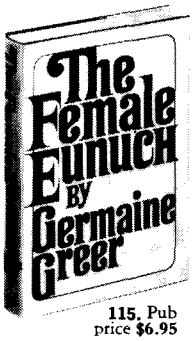
103. THE NEW ROGET'S THESAURUS IN DICTIONARY FORM *Edited by* NORMAN LEWIS (Pub list price **$5.50**)

117. THE CONDOR PASSES *by* SHIRLEY ANN GRAU (Pub price **$7.95**)

345. THE EUROPEAN DISCOVERY OF AMERICA The Northern Voyages *by* SAMUEL ELIOT MORISON Illustrated (Pub list price **$15**)

450. THE KEY TO FEMININE RESPONSE IN MARRIAGE *by* RONALD DEUTSCH Illustrated (Pub list price **$6.95**)

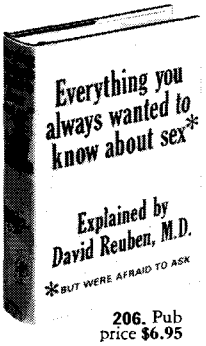
526. UNDERSTANDING HUMAN SEXUAL INADEQUACY *by* FRED BELLIVEAU *and* LIN RICHTER Foreword by Masters and Johnson (Pub list price **$6.95**)



115. Pub price **$6.95**

161. JOY OF COOKING *by* IRMA S. ROMBAUER *and* MARION R. BECKER Illustrated (Pub list price **$6.95**)

452. PORTRAIT OF ISRAEL *by* MOSHE BRILLIANT Photographs (Pub list price **$7.95**)



206. Pub price **$6.95**

116. DISRAELI *by* ROBERT BLAKE. Illustrated (Pub list price **$12.50**)

431. THE RISE AND FALL OF THE THIRD REICH *by* WILLIAM L. SHIRER (Pub list price **$15**)

163. MACRAMÉ Creative Design in Knotting *by* DONA Z. MEILACH Illustrated (Pub list price **$7.95**)

260. THE OXFORD DICTIONARY OF QUOTATIONS (Pub list price **$12.50**)

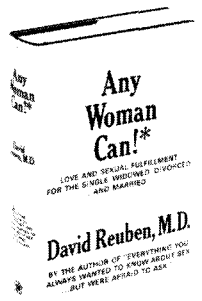
156. STILWELL AND THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IN CHINA, 1911-1945 *by* BARBARA W. TUCHMAN Photos. (Pub list price **$10**)

234. THE OXFORD HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE *by* SAMUEL ELIOT MORISON Illustrated (Pub list price **$15**)

201. LOVE AND WILL *by* ROLLO MAY (Pub list price **$7.95**)

329. THE HISTORY OF PSYCHIATRY *by* F. G. ALEXANDER, M.D., *and* S. T. SELESNICK, M.D. Illustrated (Pub list price **$11.95**)

198. CREWEL EMBROIDERY *by* ERICA WILSON. Illus. (Pub list price **$7.95**)


Any Woman Can!*
LOVE AND SEXUAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE SINGLE WIDOWED DIVORCED AND MARRIED
David Reuben, M.D.
BY THE AUTHOR OF "EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT SEX* BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK

131. Pub price **$7.95**

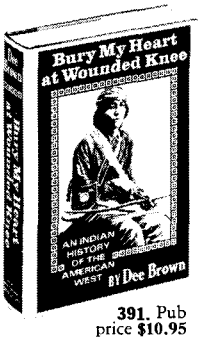
319. THE COLLAPSE OF THE THIRD REPUBLIC: An Inquiry into the Fall of France in 1940 *by* WILLIAM L. SHIRER. Maps (Pub list price **$15**)

390. 536 PUZZLES & CURIOUS PROBLEMS *by* HENRY ERNEST DUDENEY. Illustrated (Pub list price **$9.95**)

168. THE FAMILY BOOK OF PREVENTIVE MEDICINE *by* BENJAMIN F. MILLER, M.D. *and* LAWRENCE GALTON (Pub list price **$12.95**)

381. ROUSSEAU AND REVOLUTION *by* WILL *and* ARIEL DURANT. Illustrated (Pub list price **$15**)

485. KNOW YOUR ANTIQUES *by* RALPH *and* TERRY KOVEL. Photos (Pub list price **$7.95**)



391. Pub price **$10.95**

THESE TWO BOOKS COUNT AS ONE CHOICE

200. HOW CHILDREN LEARN *and* HOW CHILDREN FAIL *by* JOHN HOLT. (Pub list prices total **$9.45**)

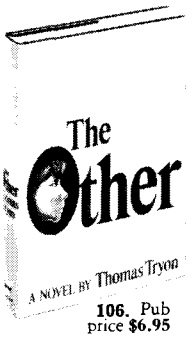
328. MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS *by* ANTONIA FRASER. Photographs (Pub list price **$10**)

580. MASTERING THE ART OF FRENCH COOKING *by* JULIA CHILD, LOUISETTE BERTHOLLE, SIMONE BECK. Illustrated (Pub list price **$12.50**)

127. THE POETRY OF ROBERT FROST *Edited by* EDWARD CONNERY LATHEM (Pub list price **$10.95**)

244. THE NEW YORK TIMES COOK BOOK *Ed. by* CRAIG CLAIBORNE Illus. (Pub list price **$9.95**)

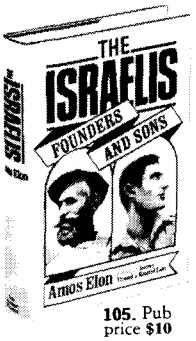
484. THE 900 DAYS The Siege of Leningrad *by* HARRISON E. SALISBURY Photographs (Pub list price **$10**)



106. Pub price **$6.95**

THESE THREE BOOKS COUNT AS ONE CHOICE

174. IN SOMEONE'S SHADOW, LISTEN TO THE WARM, STANYAN STREET & OTHER SORROWS *by* ROD MC KUEN. (Pub list prices total **$13.50**)



105. Pub price **$10**

A LIBRARY-BUILDING PLAN EVERY READING FAMILY SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

THE EXPERIMENTAL MEMBERSHIP suggested here will prove, *by your own actual experience*, how effectually membership in the Book-of-the-Month Club can **keep you from missing** books you fully intend to read.

As long as you remain a member, you will receive the Book-of-the-Month Club *News*, a literary magazine each issue of which describes the coming Selection as well as scores of other important books, most of which are available at substantial discounts—up to **40%** on more expensive volumes. All of these books **are identical to the publishers' editions in format, size and quality.** If you wish to purchase the Selection, do nothing and it will be shipped to you automatically. However, there is no obligation to purchase any particular volume. If you do not wish the Selection or any other book offered in the *News*—or if you want one of the Alternates—simply indicate your decision on the convenient form provided and mail it so that it is received by the date specified on the form.

If you continue after this experimental membership, you will earn, *for every Club Selection or Alternate you buy*, a Book-Dividend Credit. Each Credit, upon payment of a nominal sum, often only **$1.00 or $1.50**—somewhat more *for unusually expensive volumes or sets—will entitle you to a Book-Dividend® which you may choose from over 100 fine library volumes available over the year.* This unique library-building system, together with the sizable discounts on Selections and Alternates, enables members to save **more than 60%** of what they would otherwise have to pay for books they want to read and own.

BOOK-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB, INC.
280 Park Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10017 **1-A33-10**

Please enroll me as a member of the Book-of-the-Month Club and send me the four volumes whose numbers I have indicated in boxes below, billing me $1.00 for all four volumes. I agree to purchase at least four additional Selections or Alternates during the first year I am a member, paying special members' prices. My membership is cancelable any time after buying these four books. A postage and handling charge is added to all book shipments.

INDICATE BY NUMBER THE FOUR BOOKS YOU WANT

MR. / MRS. / MISS .....
(Please print plainly)

Address.....

City.....

State..... *Zip*.....

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Commentary

VOLUME 52 NUMBER 4 *OCTOBER 1971*

Articles	45	America after Vietnam *Edmund Stillman*
	53	From an Israeli Diary *Walter Laqueur*
	61	Apocalyptic Thinking *Samuel McCracken*
Fiction	73	Custom and Costume *Alan Goldfein*
In the Community	80	Literature and Crisis *Robert Alter*
Observations	89	Family Fever Chart *Sonya Rudikoff*
	93	The Real Grandees *Edouard Roditi*
Issues	4	Doomsday Fears & Modern Life *Norman Podhoretz*
Letters	8	from *Harold Steinberg, Erich Goode, Dallas Blumenthal, Kenneth Keniston, Joseph Adelson, Harold Rosenberg, Daniel Bell, Harold Fisch, Theodore K. Rabb, Igal Roodenko,* and others
Books in Review	99	Kent State, by James A. Michener *Stanley M. Elkins*
	108	MF, by Anthony Burgess; West of the Rockies, by Daniel Fuchs; A Cry of Absence, by Madison Jones; Losing Battles, by Eudora Welty; Birds of America, by Mary McCarthy *John Thompson*
	112	Jews and Blacks, by Ben Halpern *Irving Howe*
	116	The Nightmare Decade, by Fred J. Cook *David M. Oshinsky*

Editor: Norman Podhoretz

Executive Editor: Neal Kozodoy (on leave)

Managing Editor: Marion Magid
Associate Editors: Brenda Brown, Maier Deshell

Contributing Editors: Milton Himmelfarb, George Lichtheim

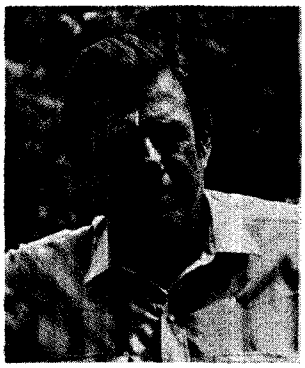
General Manager: Martin Edelston
Circulation Manager: Ronald Greene
Production Manager: Bruce Lodi
Typography: Ira Teichberg
Cover: The Drawing Board, Inc.

COMMENTARY is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee—Single copy is $1.00; $10 a year; 3 years $27; 5 years $39.50—Add $1.50 per year for foreign postage charge—Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices. Copyright © 1971 by the American Jewish Committee; all rights reserved under International and Pan American Copyright Conventions—Indexed in Readers' Guide, Book Review Digest, Public Affairs Information Service, and Index to Jewish Periodicals—*Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.*

EDITORIAL & BUSINESS OFFICES: 165 E. 56th St., New York 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

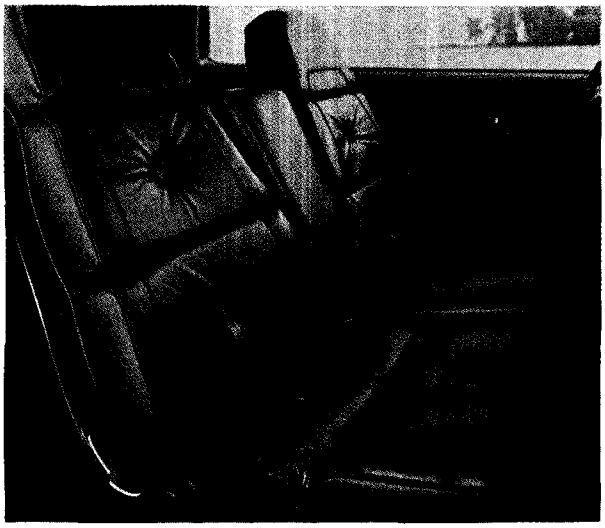
When I say Chrysler gives every Imperial a road test, I don't mean they just drive it around the block.



They give it a road test.

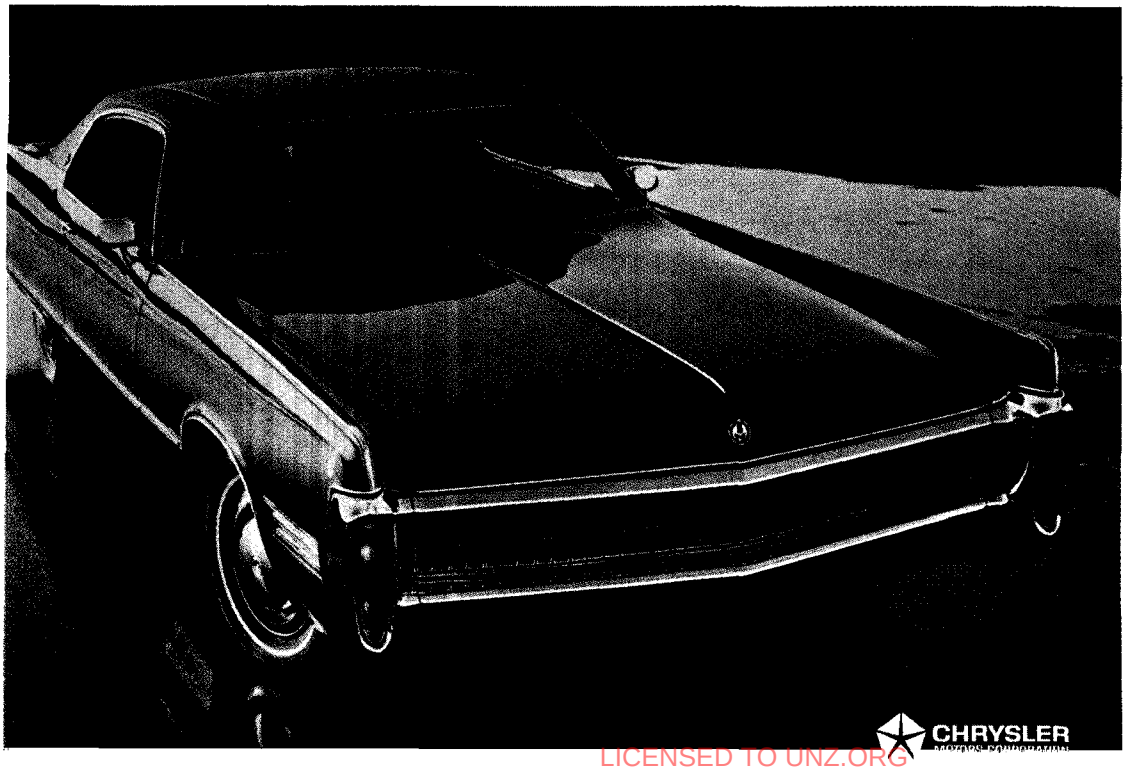
I've seen the way Chrysler builds cars; they really care about their product. And when it comes to the Imperial, they don't stop with just building it. They run it through a road test that gives it over 100 different checks. From the windshield wipers to the transmission.

If it's not right, they don't want you to have it. That's nice to know when you spend that kind of money for a new car.



Look inside an Imperial. Examine some of the things they check during the road test. The way the seats work. The fit of the glove box door. The operation of the windows.

Then, feel the carpeting and the upholstery. Sit behind the wheel and look around you. I think the things you can see will tell you something about the way this car's put together.

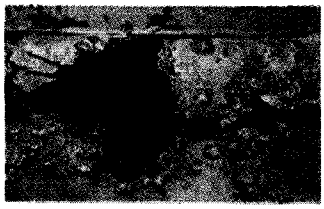


If everybody would do as much as the automobile industry is doing to clean up our environment, we'd be well on the way to solving many of our problems.

Chrysler has already done a lot to cut down pollution.

And now they've developed a new electronic ignition system that does away with the points and condenser that can wear out. You can order it on every Chrysler.

It helps keep the engine tuned longer. And a tuned engine means a cleaner exhaust.



You're washing your car, you poke at a little spot and a chunk of rust falls off. Ever have that happen to you?

Well, the Chrysler people have been doing something to help keep that from happening. They dip their car bodies in special solutions to help prevent corrosion.

CHRYSLER
Plymouth

Coming through with the kind of car America wants.

That's their slogan this year. And I think that's the kind of car they're building. One that lasts longer and works better than anything they've ever built before.

I drive an Imperial. What else? It's big and beautiful and plush . . . and my snooty friends love to sit back in it.

But the important thing to me is the way Chrysler puts these cars together. They want this car to last. And I think that's the kind of car America wants

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Doomsday Fears & Modern Life

Norman Podhoretz

THE kind of apocalyptic thinking to which Samuel McCracken (p. 61) directs his acerbic attention is, as apocalyptic thinking goes, a relatively mild and optimistic variety. All the writers he talks about envision a future which will be utterly different in every respect from the world of the present, but they do not foresee the end of the world itself or the final destruction of the human race. It is, so to speak, a social and not a natural apocalypse they prophesy. Society as we know it will come to an end but society of a sort, perhaps even a superior sort, there will be. The human species will change, perhaps so radically as to become different in kind from ourselves, subject to none of the laws by which we and all our ancestors were bound, but for Mr. McCracken's apocalypticists the change is more likely to be for the better than for the worse. Better or worse, life in any event there will be.

For another strain of apocalyptic thinking which has been gathering force and influence in the last few years, however, the human species has reached a point at which it is about to destroy itself altogether and quite possibly the entire planet as well. The contemporary avatar of this ancient expectation of an imminent End of Days was given a powerful stimulus by the invention of nuclear weapons, and if not for one of the most curious and least remarked developments of the curious age in which we live, it might well have gone on indefinitely looking to the mushroom cloud for the perverse comfort a great anxiety always finds in the thought that its fears are real. The curious development was that everyone suddenly stopped believing in the possibility of a major nuclear war.

When exactly this astonishing change occurred, or why it should have occurred at all, would be very hard to say; conceivably it was an effect of the Cuban missile crisis. But whatever the reasons may be, there is no question that very few people still seriously fear the eruption of a major nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union or for that matter between the United States and China —the kind of war that used to be associated with visions of the end of the world and that was so recently considered by so many to be a virtual inevitability. It is true that the idea of a limited nuclear war between Israel and Egypt or even between the Soviet Union and China still seems plausible, but such a war, whether rightly or wrongly, is no longer commonly imagined to spell the end of the world.

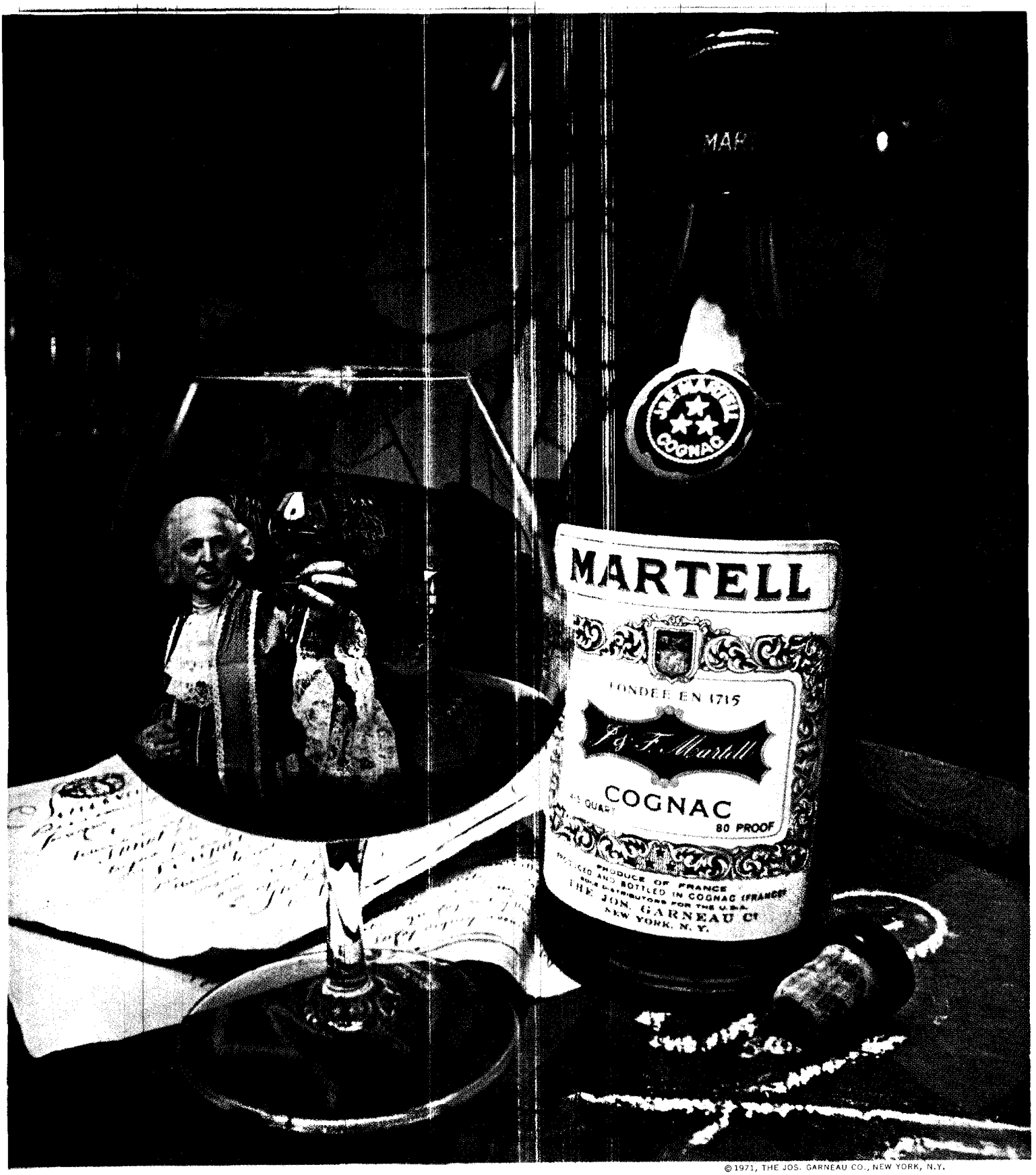
The fascinating consequence is that we rarely find any great emphasis being put on nuclear war nowadays by the catastrophist schools of apocalyptic thought. They mention it, of course, they trot it out and bow to it and pay it their obeisance. But they do so in a spirit of perfunctory piety which perfectly expresses their recognition that it has all at once become a doddering presence in the contemporary imagination, that it has lost its power to convince. For the moment at least, that power has passed to pollution. Technology is destroying ecology and will end by destroying us all: so, stated in the most general terms, runs the formula which in not much more than a year or two has won a most amazing degree of uncritical acceptance in every circle and on every side.

Thus ideas which only yesterday would have been dismissed as crackpot are today given a respectful hearing. There is, for example, the theory that thermal pollution is melting the polar ice cap by slow but inexorable degrees, so that the end of the world will come by flood (in direct contravention of the Biblical promise expressed in the symbol of the rainbow). Or, on the contrary, we are told that the rays of the sun are being effectively blocked by the pollution of the air, so that the end of the world will come by frost. More plausibly E. J. Mishan, a catastrophist who has nothing whatever of the crackpot in him, warns of "the chances of extinction of our species from uncontrolled epidemics caused by the deadlier viruses that have evolved in response to widespread application of new 'miracle' drugs, or from some ecological calamity caused by our inadvertent destruction of those forms of animal and insect life that once preyed on the pests that consumed men's harvests."*

PROFESSOR MISHAN, unlike some others among us of an apocalyptic bent of mind, is well aware that "the belief that the end of the world was drawing nigh has been widely held at different times in human history." But he will allow no consolation to be gained from this, for the "doomsday fears of yesterday had no rational basis" while "those of today have plenty." This seems to me an amazingly arrogant statement, especially coming from a writer who professes in other contexts to have so little faith in the superiority of the modern understanding of the mysteries of life on this planet to the wisdoms of "yesterday." The truth is that the doomsday fears of today have as much or as little rational basis as doomsday fears ever did, if by "rational" we mean subject to

* "Making the Future Safe for Mankind," *The Public Interest*, Summer 1971.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



©1971, THE JOS. GARNEAU CO., NEW YORK, N.Y.

1715. Cognac begins.

The world is discovering cognac.

At the same time, Jean Martell arrives in Cognac Country.

He is beguiled by the distilling of brandy.

By 1728, 27,000 barrels of cognac have been exported.

That was 243 years ago.

Since then, it is difficult to separate the history of cognac from that of House of Martell.

In fact, there has been no other occupation for anyone in the Martell family except that of creating fine cognac.

Which is probably the reason Martell cognacs are the largest-selling in the world.

Martell. Taste history.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

scientific proof. No proof exists that the end of the world is at hand. We do not even have persuasive evidence pointing to that conclusion. All we have, exactly as the men of "yesterday" did, are warnings and exhortations to the effect that we are doomed unless we repent and change our ways and return to the proper path. That such warnings and exhortations are often voiced by professional scientists and couched in the language of science does not in the least endow them with the authority of tested scientific statements. When they speak of these matters, the scientists in question are speaking not as scientists but as moralists and ideologues, and no one ought to be fooled.

But if there is no rational basis for the apocalypticism of Mishan and others, neither is Sir Peter Medawar right on the other side in asserting that "the deterioration of the environment produced by technology is a technological problem for which technology has found, is finding, and will continue to find solutions." Even setting aside the interesting theoretical question of how a problem which is by definition a consequence of the growth of technology can be solved by the further growth of technology, one must still reject the notion—so characteristic of a certain type of liberal mentality—that anything can be had for nothing provided the right formula or gimmick or gadget can be found. Surely where the benefits of technology are concerned, as with human affairs in all of their many modalities, there will always be a price to pay, and the price will always be high, and justly high in the case of technology considering what it can buy. The air of industrial societies will never be as sweet as the air of a mountain retreat; cities will never afford the "margin, space, ease and openness" for which critics like Mishan so eloquently yearn, however lacking in eloquence and however philistine the spirit in which they speak of the gains in freedom of every kind—from want, from disease, from tribal coercion, from claustrophobia—that are purchased, most willingly and eagerly by most people the minute they are given the chance, through the sacrifice of other undoubted goods to the gods of advanced modernity.

In saying that there will always be a price for technology, and that the price will always be high, I do not by any means wish to suggest that it cannot be lowered to some extent or that technology itself cannot be employed to that end. For it is undoubtedly true that some of the dangerous and unpleasant consequences of technology can be softened or even eliminated by technological means. Ways can be found of producing energy that are less damaging to the environment than traditional methods have been (though there is always the likelihood that these new methods will take their toll of different features of the environment than present methods do). Factories and automobiles and airplanes can in fact be equipped with devices—technological devices—that cut down on the volume of noxious material they pour into the atmosphere; streams and rivers already polluted can in fact be cleaned up and the air can be cleaned up too (though there is always the likelihood that all this can only be accomplished at the expense of other social and even ecological goods). Nevertheless, as much of this kind of thing as can be done should be done, just as at an earlier stage of industrial development certain necessary measures were taken in the field of sanitation and in the field of public health.

It is precisely here that the damaging effects of the apocalyptic perspective make themselves most vividly felt. On the issue of the environment, as on so many other issues, the prophets of doom are often excused or even praised on the ground that they "wake people up" to the existence of a problem and therefore contribute to the mobilization of the political will necessary to work toward solutions. My own observation is that, on the contrary, prophesies of doom are more likely to put people to sleep than to wake them up: why bother striving if the end is in sight? And when it is not serving to induce apathy, the apocalyptic perspective is serving to prepare for and justify the institution of extraordinary measures of political control. For to announce the apocalypse is, at bottom, to declare a state of emergency, and the suspension of normal liberties is one of the first things that happens when a state of emergency is declared. On this account alone, if for no other reason, any alarmist or catastrophist view of any public problem—especially one so fundamental as the survival of the species itself—ought to be received with the greatest skepticism, and the heaviest burden of proof put on anyone who wishes to persuade us that we are doomed unless we radically change our ways. In the face of the clear eagerness of the vast majority of people—not just in the Western countries, but everywhere, all over the world—to acquire or hold on to the benefits of life in an advanced industrial society, and in the face of their obvious willingness to pay even an exorbitant price, only the most extreme measures of political, social, and moral coercion could accomplish the kind of reversal of the forces of technological growth which the apocalyptic critics tell us is our only alternative to doom.

For myself I believe in the existence of a third alternative which is to accept modern society, with its imperatives of restless growth, as a *viable* human possibility superior to some the world has seen and inferior to others but in any case a viable possibility and a *natural* one: a poor thing, perhaps, but our own. It is the way into which *we* were born and the way in which we are going to die, and it is the way in which, between those two points, we have to make a life. To make a life is to strike a continuing series of bargains—with nature, with the past, with the future—and to make a good life is to make the soundest and fairest bargains we can. This is not what the apocalyptic perspective asks us or encourages us to do, but it is the best we can do and it probably is all we should ever even try. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Announcing the 1972 Grand Ville... with a new kind of bumper to help protect it.

We couldn't see building our most luxurious Wide-Track ever—without something special to help protect it.

The new front bumper system on all full-sized Pontiacs for 1972 has two steel boxes, filled with resilient material, positioned between the bumper and the frame. On minor impact, the material absorbs energy.

Grand Ville's elegant formal roof has a double-shell construction. It acts as a sound insulator. And it helps give Grand Ville the smoothest, quietest Wide-Track ride in Pontiac history.

The roof also helps make Grand Ville's interior roomy. Across the shoulders. Over the head. Around the legs.

We gave the 1972 Grand Ville the richest appointments of any Pontiac.

We also gave it a long list of safety equipment. Side-guard door beams. An energy-absorbing steering column. Dual master cylinder brake system. And many more.

As you can see, nothing was spared to make Grand Ville the flagship of the Pontiac line. The 1972 Grand Ville is simply the car that has it all.

GM
MARK OF EXCELLENCE

That's what keeps Pontiac a cut above.

Pontiac Motor Division

Buckle up for safety.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Statement of Aims

In sponsoring COMMENTARY, the American Jewish Committee aims to meet the need for a journal of significant thought and opinion on Jewish affairs and contemporary issues. Its pages will be hospitable to diverse points of view and belief, and it hopes to encourage original creative endeavor in the various fields of culture. The opinions and views expressed by COMMENTARY's contributors and editors are their own, and do not necessarily express the Committee's viewpoint or position. The sponsorship of COMMENTARY by the Committee is in line with its general program to enlighten and clarify public opinion on problems of Jewish concern, to fight bigotry and protect human rights, and to promote Jewish cultural interest and creative achievement in America.

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
Philip E. Hoffman, *President*

The Commentary Publication Committee

Maurice Glinert, *Chairman*

Eli M. Black
Charles D. Breitel
Maxwell Dane
Edward E. Elson
Richard C. Ernst
Sydney M. Kaye
Lewis J. Laventhol
Ned Pines
Frederick P. Rose
David Sher
John Slawson
Harry Steiner
Alan M. Stroock*
Laurence A. Tisch
Ben Touster
Gerard Weinstock

**Honorary Member*

Letters from Readers

The Question of Drugs

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The puritanism of Samuel McCracken in "The Drugs of Habit and the Drugs of Belief" [June] goes much deeper than he seems to realize, though he does make the coy admission: "Yes, Virginia, the opposition to drugs contains a measure of puritanism." Far more than a measure, I fear, in *his* opposition at least, and it does matter in assessing what Mr. McCracken has to say, insofar as any sensibility is a referent for moral judgments. The puritan, modishly shabby, is against embellishments in any age, against intervention between man and God, against *vanitas* and its works, against dancing, make-up, theater, against the baroque, the rococo; at one time or another he is drawn to see these, *inter alia*, as the work of the Devil.

Throughout, Mr. McCracken reveals the puritan vision central to most of his assumptions about drugs and reality. "The effects of marijuana," he asserts, "comparatively mild as they may be, are not those one experiences without intervention." Untrue, as anyone will testify who has had an ecstatic religious experience, love seizures, self-induced euphoria, manic cycles, etc. This idea also runs counter to a view expressed elsewhere in the article that you can "turn on," and should be able to, without the *intervention* of drugs. That's what really disturbs Mr. McCracken, *intervention*, for he warns about the implication of "needing chemical aid before having adequate emotion." One is led to wonder how one might have "adequate emotion" without the "chemical aid" of the metabolic process, which becomes acceptable, I suppose, since it is internal and therefore not a showy dependency.

Backing and filling on his puritan trip, Mr. McCracken refers to the drug culture's "nasty assumption that man is not good enough without drugs." Nasty or not, despite the puritans in his midst, man has always assumed that he needs things other than himself for himself, going back to fire and the wheel, which were really serious interventions. One can imagine an *Ur*-puritan inveighing against fire, not only because of its danger, but for the simple reason that we ought to be able to keep ourselves warm without the "chemical aid" of the consuming flames; or, somewhat later, what's the point of the wheel—aren't we good enough to carry our burden without the aid of those round works of the Devil?

Character is what the deep-dyed puritan really loves, the stronger and more independent the better. He relies on self-reliance to the point of metaphoric addiction with the heady side-effects of hypocrisy, a long-time puritan turn-on. Among the neo-puritans, if character seems a bit obvious, then "humanity" takes its place as an honorific, but the objective is the same—self-wrought independent humanity; anything else is sick: "There really is something pathological," Mr. McCracken avows, "about a situation in which humanity is seen as something attainable only with chemical *intervention* [italics added]."

Back in the early 17th century, a popular preacher named William Prynne had this to say about dancing: "Dancing is for the most part attended with many amorous smiles, wanton compliments, unchaste kisses, scurrilous songs and sonnets, effeminate music, lust, provoking attire, ridiculous love pranks, all of which savor only of sensuality, of raging fleshly lusts. Dancing serves no necessary use, no profitable, laudable, or pious end at all; it issues only from the inbred depravity, vanity, wantonness, incontinence, pride of a man's depraved natures. No way is large or smooth enough for capering roisterers, for jumping, skipping, dancing dames but that broad, beaten, pleasant road that leads to Hell."

If we assume, as the puritan does, that the race is evolving toward corruption, and that every new ornament drags him (us) toward Hell, then he (the puritan) has every right, as Prynne does, to point out that course. Considering the prevalence of incurable pox in his time, the Rev. Prynne could well have been standing on as firm ground in condemning dancing as Mr. McCracken is when he condemns drugs—the dangers are obvious in both cases: Mr. McCracken and Norman Podhoretz (in "Seducer of the Innocent," Issues, June) may well be right in insisting that pot, for example, *leads* to heroin and lethal addiction, as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In business, you get ahead and stay ahead when you spot the trends

In business today, spotting the trends can be the name of the game if you want to be successful. Yet all too often, men on the way up lose precious time because they fail to recognize a golden opportunity. That's why it's so important for you to get acquainted now with *The Wall Street Journal*, the newspaper that's made a business of spotting trends.

Every business day, The Journal's front page offers you two full columns of unique trend-spotting reports: stories that tell you not only what is *going on*, but that also give you insights on what may be *coming up*.

For example: "Swiss Banks: What the U.S. Government Is Trying To Do About American Accounts;" "Helping The Buyers: New Moves Planned By The FTC To Alter Credit Practices In The Consumer's Favor;" and "Laurel And Hardy Live! The Growing Cult Of Worshippers Spark a New Retail Bonanza."

On The Journal's front page you also get "What's News" — side-by-side capsules of what's happening in the world and the nation, as well as in business and finance. In fact, if it's newsworthy, you can trust The Journal to keep you up to the minute with the salient facts.

Inside The Journal, you benefit from important daily business features such as Abreast of The Market, Heard on the Street, Who's News, The Dow Jones Averages, dividend news, markets, and commodities.

Then, too, each day's issue of The Journal brings you a valuable once-a-week report: Business Bulletin, Tax Report, Washington Wire, Labor Letter, The Outlook.

On The Journal's famous editorial page, you'll find Review and Outlook, Letters to the Editor, The Bookshelf, and stimulating movie and theater reviews.

So you see, when it comes to the news, you don't really miss a thing when you read *The Wall Street Journal*. Reporting is concise and accurate . . . with daily contributions from award-winning writers.

No wonder so many successful businessmen start every business day with us. And they're able to do so, regardless of where they live, because The Journal is printed in nine modern plants located all across the country.

The best way to make sure *you* get The Journal every business day is to subscribe now: Enjoy 75 issues sent directly to your home or office for only $10. If during those 15 weeks you are not satisfied, you may cancel your subscription and receive a full refund on the balance. But mail the coupon today.

Enjoy a head start in business every business day

Subscribe now: 75 issues for only $10

The Wall Street Journal 2A409
200 Burnett Road
Chicopee, Massachusetts 01021

Yes, I want to take advantage of your introductory subscription offer. Please send me *The Wall Street Journal* for 15 weeks and bill me for only $10.

Print Name_____

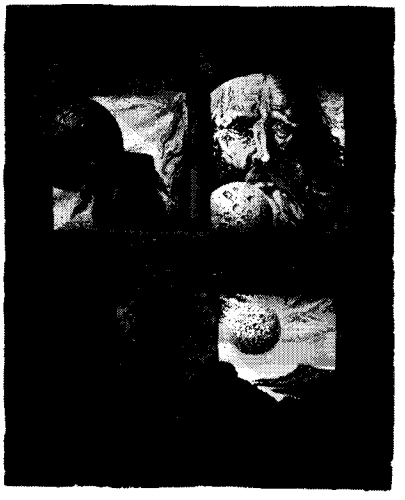
Street_____

City_____

State_____ Zip_____

☐ Check here if you enclose payment.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



serigraph "The Four Windows"

the surrealist works of Israeli painter

Samuel

BAK

opening Oct. 10

pucker / safrai gallery

171 newbury st. boston

catalogue: $2.

dancing *leads* to lust and Hell, though one might assume that both lust and addiction came into being because of other chemistries as well.

I am quite ready to agree with Messrs. Prynne, McCracken, and Podhoretz that the Devil is busily at work among us, but we must also remember the Devil's protean capacities. The Devil's work of today (dancing or drugs) tends to become the commonplace of tomorrow as fears subside and antidotes emerge. Nevertheless, Mr. McCracken's view of "drugs" hangs on his distaste for "chemical intervention" as a special Devil, though one assumes he certainly couldn't mind the *intervention* of penicillin or anesthesia which, although lifesaving, could be as "lethal" as anything the drug culture has ever served up. (Undoubtedly, at the introduction of anesthetics in the last century, there were stubborn doctors who must have required of their patients that they have the character . . . to go through surgery without the numbing effects of chemical intervention.)

The question remains: Do we *need* drugs, even though they can be "lethal to life itself," as Mr. Podhoretz says, or at least to the corporate "academic community," as Mr. McCracken maintains? The answer is not an easy one to come by, since it relates to complex views of reality and inner life, which in principle and in fact, contrary to the puritan view, cannot feed only on itself. A clue may be found in Mr. McCracken's joking aside about his ability to enjoy Monopoly without the help of pot, where others assert its utility, which, assuming that there are no jokes, means only that he is not prepared to recognize dimensions of enjoyment other than the levels he alone can achieve.

The issue of subjective enjoyment and Charles Reich's claim that "drugs allow one to make connections not otherwise made" are countered by Mr. McCracken's assertion that "there is a reality out there, that we can perceive it, that no matter how difficult the perception, the reality is finally an external fact." Thus, Mr. McCracken asserts on the one hand the righteousness of human independence while taking away with the other the internal reality of every man, his states of mind, his imagination, his needs—indeed, his chemistry, which drugs, like it or not, affect for good or ill. . . .

The puritan fervor against intervention strikes the chord of a familiar Jewish puritanism, whose refrain is, "What do you need it for?" (freely translated from the Yiddish, but also used in English). As the ultimate criticism of human vanity, this phrase does deploy the undermining puritan doubt—what, indeed, do you need it for?—the *it* being anything resembling amenities or enjoyment. In the light of eternity, there is no answer to this nagging question. But one can take a shorter-range view and consider one's internal reality, and that's what you need it for—to please your skin, your mind, your soul, your internal chemistry. On the issue of "reality," Mr. McCracken turns to Martin Buber ("The waking have one world in common"). But he might have turned, with equal facility and perhaps better understanding, to Pirandello, Joyce, Husserl—to any of those who recognize the multiplicity of realities which the human being must deal with and shape through the strengths and weaknesses of his own inner reality. The Kingdom of God is within man.

Puritanism tends to throw the baby out with the bath water. Perhaps it would be more helpful in understanding drugs to misplace the moral lenses, and view drugs as a new technology, with all the customary ambiguities of such phenomena, yet capable nevertheless of creating a subculture, or at least creating a change in the inner landscape. Drugs have always existed as a fact; in recent years they have become a political issue. But they certainly are not going to disappear as a result of moral taboos and legal repression. They should be studied and controlled, but spared the puritan stigma which tends to lump the good, bad, and indifferent into one devilish package, so that the young or innocent are not helped to discern the real distinctions that exist among them.

Even the question of addiction, universally considered an evil in itself, is not unambiguous: is it conceivable that in some not too distant future, in a computerized society, addiction, which bespeaks craving and deep need, might be viewed as a good sign and, indeed, the last vestige of humanity? Oversimplifying even the most extreme categories (like addiction) tends to discount the future too drastically by dwelling on absolutes of good and evil.

Puritanism has a rage for sim-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DON'T CRUISE 'TIL DECEMBER 17! WAIT FOR THE FAIRSEA!

The world's newest, most magnificent sea-going resort brings you a magnificent new kind of vacation.

Make your next vacation the thrill of your lifetime. Cruise the newest, most lavish ship afloat during its maiden season. Enjoy a dazzling $28,000,000 worth of matchless surroundings, superior service, delightful entertainment.

Glide over tropic waters as you enjoy three swimming pools. Eight lounges. Two nightclubs. Two dining rooms. Restaurants. Gymnasium. Duty-free shopping arcade. Teenage club. Nursery. Spacious theater. Even a garden.

Vacation as you go to Mexico or the South Pacific, pampered beyond belief by the most doting Italian crew ever assembled.

Hold out for the happiest holiday. Catch the Fairsea! Twenty-nine sailings from Los Angeles in 1972. Your travel agent can book you now.

11 & 12 day Mexico Cruises. Round trip from $395.*
26 & 31 day South Pacific Cruises from $730.*

*Based on minimum fare and subject to availability.
The T.S.S. Fairsea and T.S.S. Fairwind are of Liberian Registry.

1000 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90017 • Phone (213) 485-8862
Get us going with your irresistible free brochures. COM-10-71

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Travel Agent _____

SITMAR CRUISES
The vacation you have to sea, to believe.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

An IRMA SHORELL discovery...

THE WORLD'S FIRST INSTANT-ACTING FACE MASK!

It Disappears - No waiting
"Picks-You-Up" for hours
No Mess - Skin comes alive!

IRMA SHORELL
World renowned Skin-Care Authority

Like no other mask you've ever used! The "PICK ME UP" Instant-Acting face mask. Spray a 'poof' on your hand—apply it—watch as it wakes up your face — as it chases away fatigue lines, firms and moisturizes!

No Mess—It Disappears!

No more face-stretching, pulling or tugging—the marvelous white foam is smoothed on in seconds — and disappears in minutes.

Effect Lasts for Hours

Gentle yet stimulating — it leaves your skin tingling, glowing with natural stimulation that lasts for hours. Great morning or evening—anywhere — anytime you want a "PICK ME UP." Your face feels smoother, softer — can be used every day without having that taut — dry feeling. You must use it to believe it!

Irma Shorell

Write or phone

SAKS FIFTH AVENUE

NEW YORK • BOSTON • CHICAGO • DETROIT • TROY
BEVERLY HILLS • ST. LOUIS • PHOENIX • PALO ALTO • LA JOLLA
SKOKIE, ILL. • SPRINGFIELD, N. J. • PITTSBURGH • BALA CYNWYD
ATLANTA • PALM BEACH • FT. LAUDERDALE • MIAMI BEACH
CHEVY CHASE, MD. • GARDEN CITY, N. Y. • WHITE PLAINS, N. Y.

© IRMA SHORELL INC N Y C

plicity which is believed to imply order (the fewer moving parts, the better). Drugs are either good or bad for you, and that's it. Both Mr. McCracken and Mr. Podhoretz see drugs simply as the work of the Devil incarnate, tempting us with immortality, but really dealing us lethal blows. . . . Yet what they perceive as a quest for immortality may be only the altered time sense that pot gives its users, through mild dips and sorties into the unconscious, where time is an entirely different creature from the one it is in the "reality out there." As for lethality, everything in life can kill, but when and how it does so, and with what intervening powers, depends to an extent upon the inner reality of each individual.

HAROLD STEINBERG
Chelsea House Publishers
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Samuel McCracken's article is a monument of illogic and misinformation, a dreadful and silly piece. The issue deserves serious and systematic discussion.

ERICH GOODE
State University of New York
Stony Brook, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I wonder where Samuel McCracken gets the idea that the linking of assassins with hashish is an "etymological myth." According to Carl Brockelmann in his *History of the Islamic Peoples*, in the 11th century in Persia Hasan Sabbah built up a group of followers, and, to quote directly from Brockelmann: "While the narrowest circle of initiates professed a libertinism which negated any limitations by morality or religion, their agents were trained in the severest fanaticism. The murder of an enemy of the true faith designated by their master was presented to them as a work well pleasing to God, the execution of which would assure them of the joys of Paradise. Such murderers were called *Fida'is*, 'the Self-sacrificers,' or *Hashishis* (whence Assassins), those intoxicated by hashish, the narcotic element in hemp."

IDA COHEN SELAVAN
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "Seducer of the Innocent" [Issues, June] Norman Podhoretz speaks of "such addictive drugs as heroin whose sinister character is no longer denied by anyone." And, "For heroin, as everyone must surely have come to realize by now, is suicide. . . ." I submit, as with all "universal" statements, neither one is true.

I have been using opiates, including heroin, since I was fourteen years old. I am now forty-four. About the only deleterious side-effect that I have noticed is that the use of opiates causes constipation. On the other hand, as a result of existing laws, such use does cause the body to be locked up for a long period of time and puts quite a dent in one's bank account. Again, a consequence of existing laws, since the "Blue-Book" price for morphine is less than fifteen dollars an ounce and the street price is five hundred dollars an ounce (I cite morphine because there is no legal price for heroin).

As for the "hell of heroin," that's a myth promulgated by snivelers who in order to avoid serving lengthy jail sentences will say anything the "narco bulls" tell them to say.

I think that all criminal sanctions should be removed and then the "problem of drug abuse" will resolve itself. . . .

DALLAS BLUMENTHAL
Tamal, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

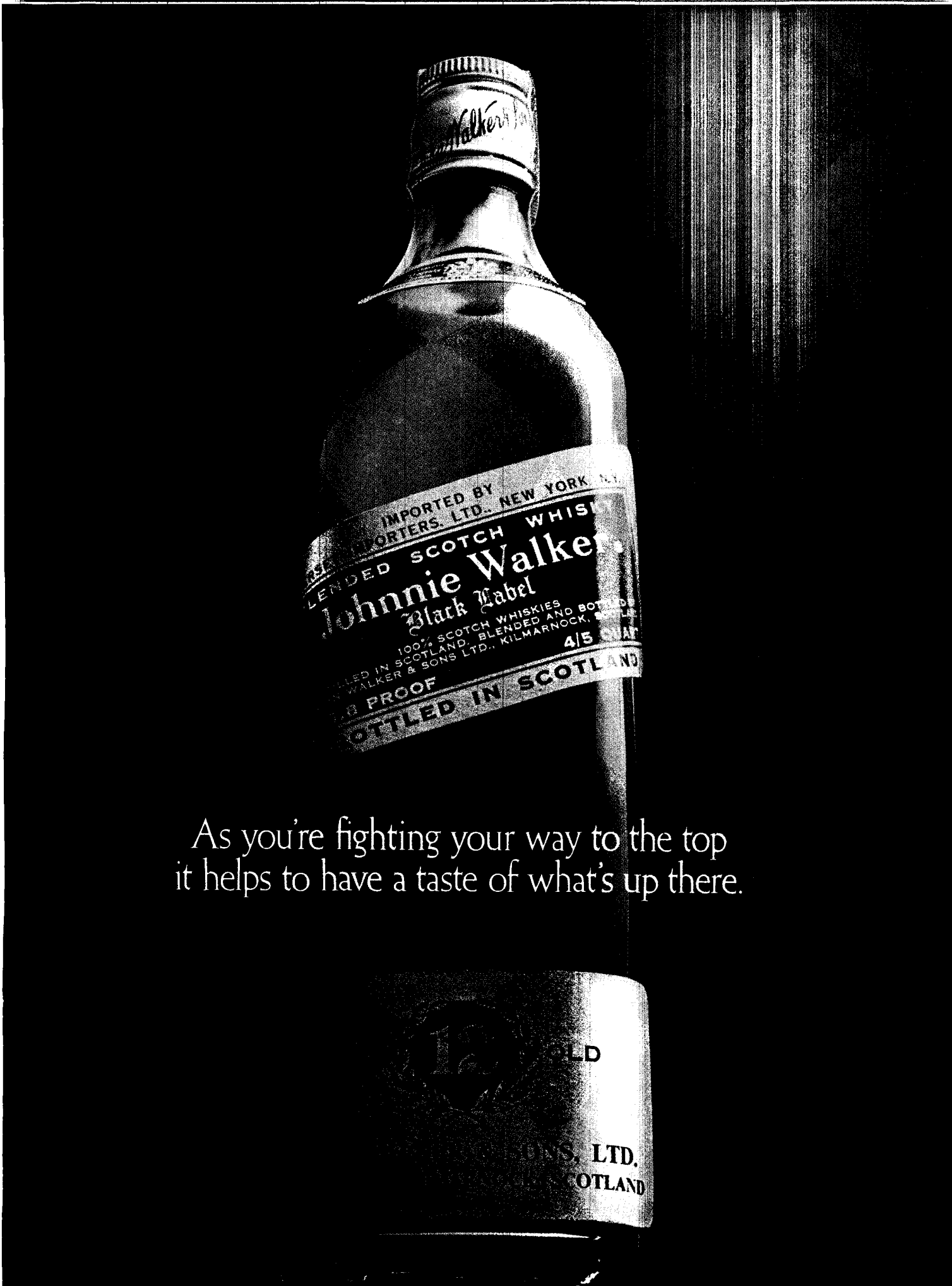
Norman Podhoretz writes:

> If it is true that marijuana is not necessarily habit-forming, it is also true that marijuana does not necessarily lead the user into the use of heroin (which can serve here as a stand-in for all the harder drugs of habit). But of course it is equally true that there are very few heroin addicts to be found—not to mention users of the hallucinogens—who did not begin by smoking marijuana, often at a relatively early age. What this means is that marijuana can and does lead to heroin in a substantial number of cases—the number being roughly equal to the number of heroin addicts among us—and what this means is that marijuana is a dangerous drug.

If this argument instructs us on the dangers of marijuana, it can also teach us about other, seemingly more innocent substances.

> If it is true that water is not necessarily habit-forming, it is also true that water does not necessarily lead the user into the use of heroin (which can serve here as a stand-in for all the harder drugs of habit). But of course it is equally true that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



As you're fighting your way to the top
it helps to have a taste of what's up there.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ABOUT $[illegible] PER 86 PROOF. PRICES MAY VARY ACCORDING TO STATE AND LOCAL TAXES. 12 YEAR OLD BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKY. 86 PROOF. BOTTLED IN SCOTLAND. IMPORTED BY SOMERSET IMPORTERS, LTD., N.Y., N.Y.

there are very few heroin addicts to be found—not to mention users of the hallucinogens—who did not begin by drinking water, often at a relatively early age. What this means is that water can and does lead to heroin in a substantial number of cases—the number being roughly equal to the number of heroin addicts among us—and what this means is that water is a dangerous drug.

HERBERT HEIDELBERGER
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz's comments on drugs suffer from a confusion of terminology. A medically-addictive or habit-forming drug is not at all the same as a habitual ingestion of peanuts or oranges. The distinction is important, for the truly addictive drug involves physiological dependence and the consequent physiological withdrawal symptoms.

Mr. Podhoretz equates psychological dependence with addiction, and perhaps he is not far off the mark. Nevertheless, the distinctions should be maintained. In any discussion of dangerous drugs—whether those of the fathers or those of the sons, to use Samuel McCracken's terminology—the interaction between drug and individual must be considered. What produces an alcoholic is not the amount of alcohol consumed, but the body chemistry of the incipient alcoholic. He is, in effect, allergic to alcohol. The person not so afflicted can consume far more alcohol than most alcoholics without getting "bombed"; he also has no psychological need to continue drinking and can therefore stop at any time—as did Mr. Podhoretz—without getting the shakes or other withdrawal symptoms.

The same is true of cigarette smokers. Some fifteen years ago, I smoked between two and three packs a day. My wife smoked the same or even less. We both decided to stop. I did so with no effort whatsoever. For me, cigarette smoking was clearly nothing more than a nasty habit. My wife found herself unable to stop. She was clearly addicted. After two days without cigarettes, her hands were constantly shaking, she was in a perpetual state of irritation, and finally she had to resume smoking. She has repeated this experience many times since.

Similarly, I know of some heavy users of coffee who are not addicted and others who are. The evidence on heroin is that physical addiction is rapid and universal, there being no such thing as a heavy user who is not an addict. The folklore has it that no one is really physiologically addicted to pot. I suspect this may not be so, but how is one to find out when the heavy users tell you that they can stop any time they want—but they don't want? As Huck Finn said when the lynch mob was being dispersed, he could have stayed if he wanted to—but he didn't want to. . . .

All of which is to say, yes, marijuana should be legalized, but with restrictions to protect the incipient addict—if that's what a pothead really is—from himself. A tall order, as our crazy quilt of ineffective alcohol laws proves, but certainly worth the attempt. In the meantime, let's try to find out what in the world we're all talking about.

ALFRED H. GREENBERG
New York City

SAMUEL MCCRACKEN writes:

Harold Steinberg demonstrates one of the difficulties in attacking an obscure author: when you don't know anything about a man, it is hard to make a convincing attack *ad hominem*. And so he judiciously falls back on the next-best technique, guilt by association. I suspect Mr. Steinberg finds the silly notion that I am a puritan so useful in coming to terms with my ideas that I could disabuse him of it only by dancing with vine leaves in my hair up Broadway, across 56th Street and into the pages of COMMENTARY. This I refuse to do. But since the evidence he arrays for my puritanism is such a canonical example of the way people confuse cerebrum and patella whenever drugs are mentioned, I shall respond, doubtless futilely, in some detail.

I begin by being at a loss as to what moral judgments my allegedly puritan sensibility must be a referent for, inasmuch as the only moral judgment I can recall making is that there isn't much to choose, morally speaking, between marijuana and alcohol. I assume that Mr. Steinberg, believing that puritans oppose sensual pleasures because they see them as immoral, believes (quite incorrectly) that so do I. Let me say it again: it is quite possible to oppose bear-baiting in the interest of the bear. Now,

Now it's easier to get a room in Tel Aviv.

Sheraton just added 136 more.

It's all part of our new addition. We had 220 comfortable guest rooms. Now we've added 136 more including 10 fabulous duplex suites. A new sauna and health club to pamper you. A heated swimming pool just for fun. A 24-hour coffee shop, Steak Room specialty restaurant and a night club featuring exciting entertainment.

All in Tel Aviv's most popular hotel. Right on the beach overlooking the Mediterranean. But only minutes away from the downtown business district.

For reservations call your travel agent. Or call 800-325-3535. Free, anytime.

800-325-3535 MAKES IT HAPPEN.

Sheraton-Tel Aviv Hotel

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ISRAEL
EUROPE
MEXICO
WEST INDIES

Le Bon Voyage is a trip on Air France. It is the assurance of the most thoughtful service, and superb cuisine. It is a choice of departing from New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, and Houston. It is a multitude of destinations: France and all Europe, Israel, Mexico, or the West Indies, or for that matter almost anywhere in the world.

Le Bon Voyage is also being on an Air France Tour, selected from our World Wide Tour Program. And, now you can look forward to a trip on the fabulous 747 — New York to Paris, and from Chicago to Montreal and Paris.

Be sure to see your Travel Agent, or call the nearest Air France office.

AIR FRANCE

le bon voyage

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

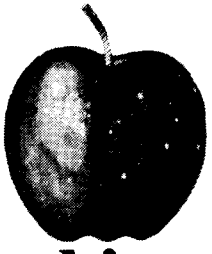
"Does an Italian wine go with Arroz con Pollo?"

Bolla does.

TRY A BOTTLE OF SOAVE BOLLA TONIGHT WHEN YOU'RE IN A ROMANTIC MOOD. OLE.
© 1971 THE JOS. GARNEAU CO., N.Y.C.

NOW IN PAPERBACK

The controversial bestseller that's leading the assault on outdated teaching methods



Teaching as a Subversive Activity

Neil Postman & Charles Weingartner

Over 100,000 copies sold of the Delacorte Press hardcover edition ($5.95). Now a Delta paperback, $2.25.

A DELTA BOOK
Dell Publishing Co., Inc.

whether drugs are to their users what a band of Southwark toughs were to the bear may be disputed, but it is an intellectual question, and one not to be settled by the sort of name-calling Mr. Steinberg finds adequate.

Next, if to be a puritan is to oppose embellishments in any age, especially dancing, theater, the baroque, and the rococo, I can triumphantly plead Not Guilty. Or is it that drugs, in our age, occupy the place of those other embellishments in another? Does Mr. Steinberg oppose police brutality? Fie, fie! Dost thou think there shall be no more clubs and mace because thou art virtuous? It is, at any rate, in this sentence—his third—that he stops talking about me and my essay and restricts himself to puritanism, a topic on which he is entertaining, but quite irrelevant.

If I may defend myself from the imputation of using language I disdain: nowhere in the essay do I use the phrase "turn on" to describe non-drug experiences. As I have said, the term is a repellent one, and while it is Mr. Steinberg's affair if his sensibility is less fastidious, I wish he would not force me to join him.

Aid, I presume, implies help from without. Accordingly, there is a distinction, in the framework I erected, between drugs and the chemicals of the metabolic process, one similar, I believe, to that between the chemicals in a natural lake and those man adds, with, I further believe, analogous results. Mr. Steinberg regularly confuses internal phenomena like drugs with external ones like fire and the wheel. These latter, quite obviously, being alterations not in man but his environment, remain a part of the external reality. Nor should it be necessary to point out that antibiotics are defenses against invasions of the body, anesthetics against certain undesirable side-effects of the scalpel. Mr. Steinberg's analogy with 19th-century medical practice is a taking one, but it betrays yet another confusion, one between life and surgery. I trust he shaves with an electric razor.

William Prynne (who was rather more than a mere popular preacher) would, I think, hardly be glad to share the pillory with me. Certainly not I with him (the very thought makes my ears hurt), because of his many qualities I admire only his courage. He was, by the way, roundly criticized in his own day for the quantities of ale he consumed while producing his pamphlets. Perhaps he found writing groovier stoned: when I say that I enjoy Monopoly sober, I say no more than that I enjoy Monopoly sober. It was the implication of the authors with whom I was dealing that it was fun only when stoned, and if Mr. Steinberg disagrees with those who deny the validity of enjoyments other than their own, his quarrel is with Messrs. Clorfene and Margolis.

Nowhere in the essay, to return to Mr. Steinberg's misquotations, do I make the assertion that there is a reality out there. I do not, indeed, know that there is. I made the very different assertion that rational behavior becomes impossible if one does not assume, as a working hypothesis, that there is such. Mr. Steinberg would send me to school to Joyce, Husserl, and Pirandello. I go to all of them, but not, as it happens, for my metaphysics. Did I so go to Pirandello, I could dispose of Mr. Steinberg with a single sentence: Right I am if I think I am. But I agree with Buber that my obligation to Mr. Steinberg is to think of him as something more than a fictional character of my own devising. I would not have dragged in Buber were there not contrary opinions on the matter, of which opinions I was well aware. I rather think Mr. Steinberg confuses two very different problems: whether reality is diverse, and whether human perception of it is so.

Whatever the answers to these questions, I have no such ambitious program as "taking away the internal reality of every man." Mr. Steinberg, for example, is welcome to his. I suspect, nevertheless, that the internal reality is distinguishable from the external; Mr. Steinberg's view of the former seems to be that it is so fragile as to be destroyed by the merest whisper that it may not have a monopoly of the trade. His definition of independence seems to me a very curious one, barely distinguishable from domination: on his view, if man cannot dominate reality, he cannot be independent of it.

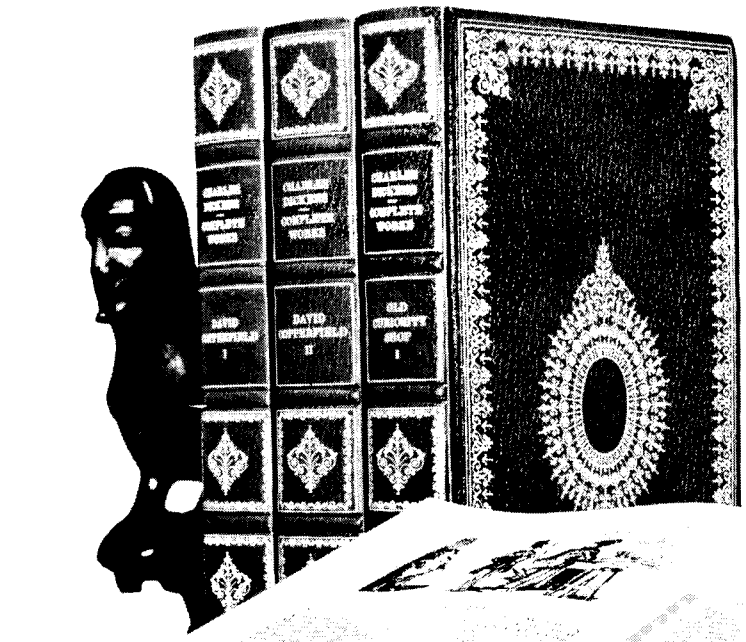
When he says that some people define the *it* of "What do you need it for?" as amenities and enjoyment, he is talking about people other than me, if he will allow me the distinction.

I quite agree with him that we ought not to lump all drugs into the same devilish package, and had

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

£125,000 ($300,000) and 2 years of loving labour went into this sumptuous Centennial Edition of

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF DICKENS



As your introduction let us send you

FREE

one volume a month

FOR THE NEXT 3 MONTHS

BOUND IN EUROPE IN OLD WORLD STYLE

The quality of printing and binding in this Centennial Edition is seldom seen in the U.S.A. The covers have the look and feel of a kid glove. Their delicate design is 24 kt. gold. The books are full of gracious touches you have not seen in years: decorated endpapers, silk headbands, sewn-in bookmarks, period illustrations. A perfect expression of good taste in decorating as well as in literature.

Now . . . let these unforgettable characters of the world's master story-teller walk into your home.

Let this be your introduction to the most fascinating characters that any writer's genius ever created. The improvident Micawber, always waiting for something to turn up . . . Uriah Heep, the "so very 'umble". . . honest Pegotty endlessly roaming in search of his seduced daughter . . . Sampson and Sarah Brass . . . Quilp . . . and poor little Nell . . . their very names breathe the magic gift of Charles Dickens for creating vivid characters. Every page you read comes alive with real people whom you'll love . . . hate . . . pity . . . and never forget! *Now meet them—treasure them in your home—in beautiful books worthy of the genius who created them.*

Rich heirloom bindings—classic illustrations

This sumptuous Centennial Edition of the Works of Charles Dickens took Heron Books in England £125,000 and 2 years of loving effort to create. The edition has taken British booklovers by storm, and is now available here at amazingly low cost. With classic-style printing, elegant gold-tooled rich-textured bindings, and the original illustrations of such famous Dickens artists as Cruikshank, "Phiz" and Tenniel, these books are treasures indeed. They will beautify your bookshelves, enrich your home, and delight you, your children, and generations to come—just as their tales have delighted generations past.

But you have to see them, take them in your hands, examine them, to recognize their full value. We therefore make this fantastic offer: *take a volume a month for the next 3 months . . . FREE!* Simply mail the Free Reservation Coupon and discover the superb Centennial Edition without obligating yourself to buy a single book!

Your opportunity to build a beautiful library — at low cost

Let us send you *David Copperfield*, Volume1, and (complete in one volume) Dickens' classic of the French Revolution, *A Tale of Two Cities*. If not delighted, please return them postpaid in 10 days and owe nothing. But if you wish to keep them, *A Tale of Two Cities* is *free:* and for Volume 1 of *David Copperfield* all we ask is the low subscriber price of $3.89 plus shipping. Next month you will receive *Oliver Twist* free plus Volume 2 of *David Copperfield* at the same low subscriber price. But you may return them both in 10 days without charge if you do not want them. In the third month you get Dickens' greatest comedy, *The Pickwick Papers*, in two volumes. To keep them, pay the same low price for Volume 1, and keep Volume 2 as another gift.

From then on we will advise you in advance of every shipment, which you may accept if you wish at the special subscriber price. Each book will be identically printed and bound in Europe to the same high standards. But you will not have to take more than you actually want. You may terminate your subscription any time you decide your collection is as complete as you want it.

Limited Edition—reserve now. Clearly, an edition of this magnificence cannot be produced *en masse*. Our import quota is limited. Should it be over-subscribed, it may take some time before additional sets can be offered. To avoid disappointment, send the Free Reservation Coupon now.

HERON BOOKS, 250 WEST 57th ST., N.Y., N.Y. 10019

Free Reservation Coupon:

HERON BOOKS, 250 West 57th Street, N.Y., N.Y. 10019

Please send without obligation your Dickens Centennial Editions of *A Tale of Two Cities* (complete) and *David Copperfield* (vol. 1). If not fully delighted, I may return both books in 10 days and owe nothing. Otherwise I may keep *A Tale of Two Cities* as a gift and pay only the low subscriber price of $3.89 plus shipping for the *David Copperfield* volume.

The next month you will send me volume 2 of *David Copperfield* plus *Oliver Twist* complete in 1 volume. Again, *Oliver Twist* is FREE, and I pay only the low subscriber price for *David Copperfield*, vol. 2. The month after, I get—again on approval—*The Pickwick Papers* complete in 2 volumes. Volume 1 is mine free if I keep the other at the low subscriber price.

Thereafter, for as long as I wish, I'll receive the other matching Centennial Edition volumes which I may return within 10 days or add to my Dickens collection at the same low subscriber price. I may terminate anytime I consider my collection complete. There is no minimum purchase obligation.

☐ **FREE COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL.**

Check here if you are responding in 5 days and we will reward your promptness with this beautiful bronze-finished Dickens Centennial Medal—yours to keep even if you return your books.

Signature_____

Print Name_____

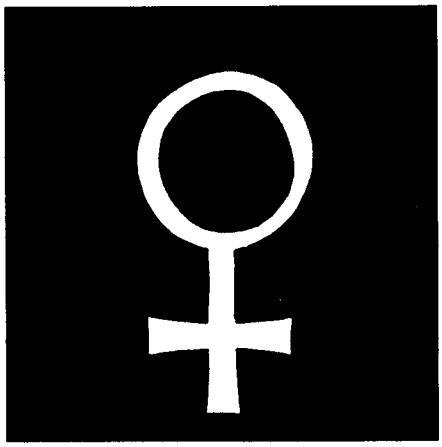
Address_____

City_____

State_____ Zip_____

FOR CANADA: Return coupon to us. Special arrangements for servicing Canadian subscribers have been made. DJ-138

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Studies in the Life of Women

AUGUST BEBEL
Woman Under Socialism
New Introduction by Lewis A. Coser
"Belongs in the library of all those men and women who believe that sexual inequality, like racial inequality and class oppression, will have to give way, if we are ever to manage to build a truly human society."—*from the Introduction*
399 pp. paper $3.95

GERDA LERNER
The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina
Pioneers for Woman's Rights and Abolition
"These are the pioneers of Women's Liberation—an indispensable book for all those tired of reading history written for and about men."—Gloria Steinem
416 pp. paper $3.95

ROBERT W. SMUTS
Women and Work in America
New Introduction by Eli Ginzberg
200 pp. paper $2.45

ELIZABETH CADY STANTON
Eighty Years & More
Reminiscences 1815-1897
New Introduction by Gail Parker
508 pp./illus. paper $3.95

ABIGAIL SCOTT DUNIWAY
Path Breaking
An Autobiographical History of the Equal Suffrage Movement in Pacific Coast States
New Introduction by Eleanor Flexner
319 pp./illus. paper $3.45

of related interest:
IRIS ANDRESKI, editor
Old Wives' Tales
Life-Stories of African Women
190 pp. cloth $5.95/paper $2.45

from your bookseller or
SCHOCKEN BOOKS
67 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y.10016
25 years of publishing in America

thought one of my principal purposes in the essay—failed at, apparently—to distinguish among them.

It may well be that at some time in the future addiction will be the last vestige of humanity. I am content to wait the day, in regard to addiction as well as to other contenders, such as cancer and hate. If this be discounting the future, let us make the most of it. Mr. Steinberg's sense of obligation to the future as a construct is impressive, but I cannot share it.

If Mr. Steinberg could drop his prejudice as to my puritanism, and reread the essay, he would discover that most of the attitudes and arguments he so vehemently rejects are of his own devising. Let him prefer whichever reality he wishes, internal or external. But let him keep them straight, insofar as I appear in either.

I suggest to Ida Cohen Selavan that myths sometimes get printed. But if she will look a few sentences down in Brockelmann, she will see that he himself hazards the guess that the association of hashish with the followers of Hasan Sabbah may be no more than a conjecture by Marco Polo. That there was a sect of Assassins is perfectly clear, but their relation to hashish is not. Some authorities believe it was used as a reward for, or inducement to, murder. Others, following the version given in the *Travels* of "Sir John de Mandeville," believe that the assassins were promised paradise, and hashish employed to afford a foretaste. The hash smokers of my own acquaintance rarely run amok, being on the whole neither more nor less hostile than anyone else. It therefore seems unlikely—and this is the point of the myth as usually cited—that the drug turned the followers of Hasan Sabbah and his successors into murderous maniacs. The etymological dimension of the tale, which I decried without explicitly stating, is that the Assassins were so called because they were made what they were by hashish. Nothing in Brockelmann leads me to think the etymology any more informative.

I really don't know what to say to Erich Goode. When an author publishes a controversial article in a journal which maintains a celebratedly voluminous correspondence column, he expects an Irate Reader to do better than muttering a few very general and hackneyed epithets. I can only respond to his call for serious and systematic discussion by observing that there are more systems than sociology, and by hoping that he is not one of those dreadful people—I believe they are called puritans—who think humor a sinful embellishment, wit and earnestness mutually exclusive.

To read over Norman Podhoretz's shoulder, I am reassured to hear about Dallas Blumenthal's good experience with the opiates, and can only hope that there is some truth in the axiom he has planted, i.e., that he remains competent to assess all deleterious side-effects, even those less easily apprehended than constipation. I cannot defend the Harrison Act, but I do wonder what to make of someone who so lightly exposes himself to its sanctions. Either heroin is doing something awfully right, or he something awfully foolish.

Mr. Heidelberger's exercise in pure statistics is a chestnut going back at least to Mark Twain. Its full staleness can best be appreciated by roasting a few new ones: 100 per cent of the people mugged in New York City in 1970 were wearing clothes; therefore. . . . Since 1846, the papacy has devolved alternately on short, stout men with an "r" in their surnames, and tall, lean men without; consequently, at the next conclave. . . . The point is that there are two ways in which the correlation between the use of marijuana and the use of heroin or other more obviously dangerous drugs is more than statistical. First, there is the human tendency, widespread, if not universal, to satiety and consequent escalation of pleasures. Second, some of the assumptions which make marijuana look good are also persuasive for the other drugs; once the assumptive leap has been made for marijuana, the jump to heroin is the less. Dr. Sam Irwin, a Portland pharmacologist, argues for the legalization of marijuana because he believes, as a result of close observation, that when marijuana is in short supply in Portland, the use of LSD, speed, and heroin goes up. The conclusion seems inescapable that there is such a thing as a dependency on drugs *in general*, satisfiable by marijuana when possible, by more dangerous drugs when necessary. I do not know what proportion of marijuana users develop a dependency of this nature, but I do know that someone who

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The kids have been crying for two days.
The dog is lost.
You wonder where he went.
You'd join him.

KAHLÚA® & Milk.
Because you deserve something nice.

Simply mix an ounce of Kahlúa to four ounces of milk on the rocks. Then, enjoy. In all this harried, frazzled, the-lawn-needs-mowing world, does anyone deserve it more than you?

For a wealth of other deserving ideas, send for our recipe book. No charge. Like Kahlúa itself, something pretty refreshing.

Coffee Liqueur
from
Sunny Mexico

53 Proof. Jules Berman & Assoc., 116 No. Robertson Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90048

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Does an Italian wine go with Hungarian Goulash?"

Bolla does.

GAY, RED BOLLA BARDOLINO BRINGS OUT THE GYPSY IN ANY GOULASH.
©1971 THE JOS. GARNEAU CO., N.Y.C.

"Fascinating... bound to excite controversy"
—*Los Angeles Times*

THE TRIAL AND DEATH OF JESUS
by HAIM COHN

Justice of the Supreme Court of Israel and member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague, Mr. Justice Cohn undertakes, in this work, to show that "neither the Pharisees nor Sadducees, neither priests nor elders, neither scribes nor any Jews, had any reasonable cause to seek the death of Jesus or his removal."

At all bookstores, $12.50

A Cass Canfield BOOK

Harper & Row
1817 49 E. 33d St., N.Y. 10016

will drink Sterno when he can't get whiskey has got a very serious drinking problem.

NORMAN PODHORETZ writes:

Returning the compliment and reading over Mr. McCracken's shoulder, I have only a few points to add to his comments on the letters above.

To Mr. Steinberg: One of my favorite passages in all of English literature is the speech from *King Lear* which begins:

> *O, reason not the need! Our basest beggars*
> *Are in the poorest thing superfluous.*
> *Allow not nature more than nature needs,*
> *Man's life is cheap as beast's. . . .*

I do not love this passage because I disagree with it.

To Mr. Blumenthal: I believe you, but I also believe other users of heroin who tell us that its effects go far beyond constipation. No doubt some of these people are whining or saying what the "narco bulls" tell them to say. But what about all those addicts whose testimony takes the form not of words but of death by overdose?

To Mr. Heidelberger: I referred in my piece to "the propagandists for marijuana" whose purpose is to persuade us that "marijuana, unlike every other substance known to man including even *milk*, was altogether innocent of any ill effects." I see now that at least some propagandists for marijuana do not think it is unique in its harmlessness among all the substances known to man: evidently some of you think it shares this characteristic with water (which really is, as I should have remembered, innocent of any ill effects). Be that as it may, I wonder whether you would have been provoked into the same sophomoric sophistry (Mr. McCracken is too polite in calling it a chestnut) by the statement that beer can and does lead to whiskey in a substantial number of cases.

To Mr. Greenberg: I sympathize with your wish to maintain distinctions, but I cannot agree with your emphasis on physiology. As I understand these matters, it is a *person* who becomes addicted, not a body with a will of its own. The addiction, of course, expresses itself in physical terms, but it is not, in my judgment, reducible to an autonomous physical condition. Nor do I agree with the stress you place on physiological withdrawal symptoms. Such symptoms last a very short time (two or three days in the case of heroin, or so one is told), but after they disappear the craving often goes on, sometimes forever. At this point it must be the person who craves the drug, not his body chemistry, and what the person craves is the experience, which is neither purely physical nor in the ordinary sense merely psychological, that used to be induced by the drug and on which he has come to depend in order to endure his life.

Radicalism among the Young

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was pained and puzzled by Joseph Adelson's "Inventing the Young" [May]—pained because I have long thought of him as a friend whose work I respect, puzzled because I have no way of understanding the roots of his angry *ad hominem* comments like, "No doubt if [radicals] told [Keniston] they could walk on water he would believe that too."

In his querulous essay, Mr. Adelson is at pains to disagree with whatever I have written on radicals. He thereby chooses to ignore large areas of agreement between us. For example, we both deplore moralism, professors who encourage trashing, upper-middle-class smugness, violence, self-righteousness, over-identification with patients, and so on. I also share his repugnance for "pervasive anti-intellectualism," "preference for jargon, slogans, and cant," "target hunger," "public piety and private cynicism," "self-pity, self-indulgence, and self-admiration," and a host of other nasty traits which, in his vague phrase, characterize "so many members of the Movement."

There remain, however, several substantive issues about which we disagree. I will mention only three of them.

First, on the issue of conscience, the super-ego, morality, and moralism, Mr. Adelson and I at least agree that this issue is extraordinarily complex and that neither of us fully understands it. He believes that my account oversimplified the issue. But to me, his citation of Psychoanalytic Scrip-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Olympic Introduces Israel Plus.

When you fly to Tel Aviv on Olympic Airways, you get more than just Tel Aviv. You also get Greece. Because Olympic Airways will let you stop over in Athens for just as long as you want at no extra charge.

Maybe you'll only want to stay overnight to rest up from your travels. But why not stay a few days?

It's a perfect chance to see Athens with its great restaurants and shops, swinging tavernas, and treasure-filled museums. And while you're in Greece, don't forget the Isles. The windmills of Mykonos and the ancient palaces of Crete are just a short flight from Athens.

Then, when you're ready, hop back on an Olympic Airways' jet for the flight to fascinating Israel. You'll finally see glorious Jerusalem. Touch the Wailing Wall. Visit the site of the Great Temple. Tour Jericho with the ruins of its fabled walls.

A lot of airlines can give you Israel. Olympic gives you Israel Plus. See your travel agent or Olympic Airways.

OLYMPIC AIRWAYS

Please, no dancing in the aisles.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

RECENT JEWISH HISTORY AND ANOTHER

THE TWISTED ROAD TO AUSCHWITZ
Nazi Policy Toward German Jews, 1933 – 1939.
KARL A. SCHLEUNES, asst. professor of history, University of Illinois, Chicago Circle Campus.

This brilliant analysis of the evolution of Nazi Jewish policy towards the "total solution" treats of the "peculiar genius" of the Nazis for ignoring reality and their inability to comprehend the situation of German Jews, particularly in the definition of who and what was Jewish. In an era somewhat parallelling that preceding the development of National Socialism, we must not fail to understand the lessons of history.

"U. of Ill., '70." "288 pp." Cloth — $7.95

LEADERSHIP OF THE AMERICAN ZIONIST ORGANIZATION, 1897 – 1930.
YONATHAN SHAPIRO, Department of Sociology, Tel Aviv University.

Relating the power struggle between the American Zionist leadership of Louis Brandeis and the European leadership of Chaim Weizmann, by analysis of their group affiliations, ideologies and status sets, Shapiro describes the gradual shift from orthodox Zionism to Palestinianism. This study is controversial and provocative, but persuasive.

"U. of Ill., '71." "300 pp." Cloth — $9.50

PRIDE AND POWER: The Rationale of the Space Program.
VERNON VAN DYKE, professor of political science, Iowa State University and author of **International Politics** and **Political Science: A philosophical Analysis.**

Deals most ably with the ulterior motives behind space exploration and by implication, other vastly expensive national projects. Although written before the historic moon landings, this important book is still topically valid and deserves the attention of all who are concerned about such gargantuan national programs.

"U. of Ill., '64." "285 pp." Cloth — $6.50

THE OWL-LIGHT BOOK COMPANY
Box 391, Paxton, Illinois 60957

Owl-Light Book Company, Box 391, Paxton, Illinois 60957
Please send me:
_____ THE TWISTED ROAD TO AUSCHWITZ, $7.95 per copy
_____ LEADERSHIP OF THE AMERICAN ZIONIST ORGANIZATION, $9.50 per copy
_____ PRIDE AND POWER, $6.50 per copy
Remittance must accompany all orders, adding 5% Illinois Sales Tax.
Name_____
Address_____
City_____
State_____ Zip_____

ture, which has it that the superego in secret alliance with the aggressive impulses often successfully conspires to topple the ego, is an even greater oversimplification of the complexities of moral life. Rage and conscience do sometimes join to overwhelm reason, and I too have warned of a self-righteous moralism that sanctions evil in the name of abstract morality. But to use psychoanalytic theory, as Mr. Adelson does, to neglect the role of genuinely moral factors in human behavior, or to condemn a group of radicals he has never met because of their presumed unconscious psychodynamics, seems to me a misuse and even a perversion of psychoanalysis. Indeed, I think it ironic that so many psychoanalytically-influenced psychologists today use the concepts of their rebellious and radical mentor, Freud, to explain away the rebellion and radicalism of the young.

A second, closely related issue is that of violence. Writing in 1967, I did not predict the events of the ensuing four years: e.g., the subsequent disintegration of the old student movement, the rise of the Weathermen and the Progressive Labor party, or for that matter the 1968 Chicago Convention, the election of President Nixon, the invasions of Cambodia and Laos, the killings at Kent State, Jackson State, and the University of Wisconsin. I did, however, stress the issue of violence, both intrapsychic and external, at great length throughout *Young Radicals.* And I warned, "For all of his efforts to control violence, sadism and cataclysm, the young radical continually runs the danger of identifying himself with what he seeks to control, and through a militant struggle against violence, creating more violence than he overcomes. The issue of violence is not resolved for these young men and women. Nor can it be."

Young Radicals was a collective biography of the leaders of Vietnam Summer 1967. It did not claim to be "psychoanalytic," nor did it claim objectivity. I had little data on most of what interests psychoanalysts, and I repeatedly made explicit my sympathy and involvement with those I studied. But in retrospect, I think my treatment of the issue of violence in these young radicals was essentially accurate. Most of them, for example, have been dismayed by the rise of terrorist groups that advocate urban guerrilla warfare, especially since it is *their* Movement that is being destroyed. And most of the other radical students and ex-students I know share these sentiments: they remain radical but they are as repelled by the *machismo* violence of the Weathermen as they are by the *kitsch* Maoism of the Progressive Labor party. We cannot begin to understand the "eerie tranquility" on American campuses this year without understanding that, as I argued in *Young Radicals,* most middle-class American students are, at a psychological as at a moral level, afraid of and opposed to overt violence. There are disastrous exceptions, contemporary Raskolnikovs who have come to consider their distaste for violence a "bourgeois hang-up" to be overcome by bombing; and Mr. Adelson's psychoanalyzing from afar may help us understand their motives. But it leaves out the dominant motives of the majority.

The most basic issue that separates us has to do with the relative weight we place on intrapsychic and external factors in human behavior. The factors that Mr. Adelson mentions are exclusively intrapsychic: e.g., "target hunger," "externalization," "id-super-ego alliance." He airily dismisses as "contemporary chic" any efforts to point to the war in Vietnam, the persistence of racism in America, the threat of thermonuclear holocaust, or the impact of affluence in creating the context that helped generate contemporary radicalism. In my view, however, an exclusively intrapsychic account leaves out at least half of the story. It is no more possible to understand radicalism among the young without attending to the realities of contemporary history than it is to understand it without attending to their childhoods, their early fantasies, their Oedipus complexes, their ids, egos, and super-egos, and their conscious values. To have adopted the exclusively intrapsychic approach of Mr. Adelson, I believe, would have made *Young Radicals* a far less adequate account than it is.

KENNETH KENISTON
Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I read Joseph Adelson's article criticizing naive and benign analyses of young radicals with some dismay. As a clinical psychologist,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Silver Martini.
For people who want a silver lining
without the cloud.

Smirnoff Silver
Ninety point four proof. Smirnoff leaves you breathless.

SMIRNOFF SILVER VODKA 90.4 PROOF DISTILLED FROM GRAIN THE PIERRE SMIRNOFF COMPANY HARTFORD, CONN. ©1971 HEUBLEIN, INC.
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I do not like to see professional psycho-diagnosticians bringing the insights and vocabulary of the clinic to the field of politics. Subtly invoked in Mr. Adelson's eloquent reality instruction was the specter of "dat ole debbil" mental illness and one of the purposes of the article seems to have been to disparage radical ideas and actions by referring these ideas and actions back to the pathological motives (endemic depressiveness that can be relieved by action, compulsive oppositionalism, the search for enemies, etc.) that supposedly inspired them.

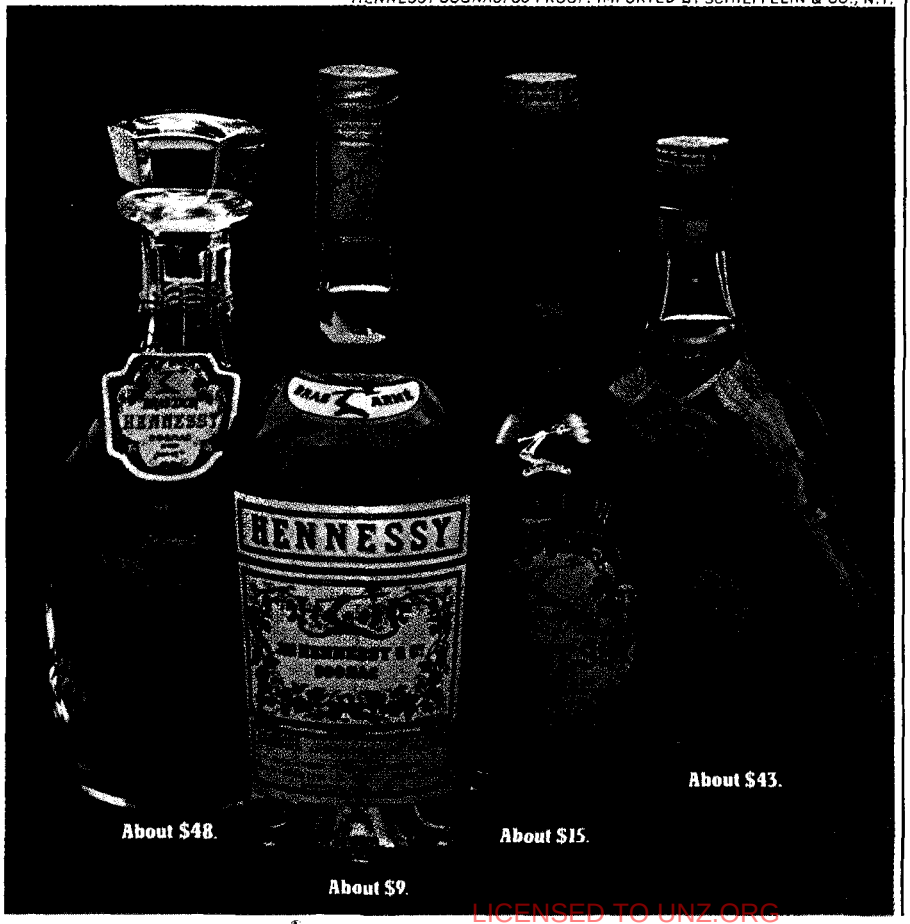
Now, regardless of whether one agrees or disagrees with radical programs (here I offer the inevitable irrelevant declaration that I am not a radical partisan), the technique of measuring political ideas against the imperfect yardstick of mental health is a dangerous one, and if the political ideas of men are said to stem from psychopathology then the next step is to begin to treat men for their "sick" ideas. Such a practice is of course a reality in the Soviet Union where intellectual dissenters now find themselves in increasing numbers in mental hospitals rather than labor camps.

This is not to say that psychopathology cannot be found in the ranks of the radical young, since historically radical political movements have always attracted a mélange of the sick and the well, of flaming psychopaths and existential heroes, of burners and builders, but that the presence of psychopathology is immaterial to an evaluation of political movements. Also, of course, history is the ultimate diagnostician and the success or failure of movements has a large role in retrospectively determining the reputation of the people who form them.

I would also like to point out to Mr. Adelson that the recent development of rural communes seems to me an encouraging indication that there are other forms of existence for us besides life in increasingly unlivable urban concentrations. To go into these communes armed with Rorschach, TAT, and MMPI and discover inevitably that many of the inhabitants are suffering from a neurotic inability to compete in the marketplace seems totally irrelevant in evaluating these institutions.

JEROME M. SIEGEL
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, Tennessee

HENNESSY COGNAC. 80 PROOF. IMPORTED BY SCHIEFFELIN & CO., N.Y.



Hennessy. Because there's a little connoisseur in everyone.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

JOSEPH ADELSON writes:

I hardly know how to respond to Jerome Siegel's letter, since he so totally misunderstands the intention of my essay. He imputes to me a position I find vulgar and reductionist—that is, the notion that there is some essential connection between "mental health," whatever that may be, and the nature of one's politics. Would that life were so simple! I find, to my continuing chagrin, that some of the finest people I know hold views I believe to be mistaken, or deplorable, or outrageous. (As a case in point, very much so, Kenneth Keniston himself, whom I regard warmly, yet whose politics are, I feel, profoundly in error.) There are, of course, some connections to be found between personality and politics—who will deny it?—but these tend to be complicated, entangled, and often remote; in any case, one's politics are far more often influenced by family heritage, class position, the immediate peer milieu, and the temper of the times. My essay was concerned only marginally with psychopathology and politics; it was more vitally concerned with what Reinhold Niebuhr called "the ambiguity of moral virtue," and, specifically, with the transformation of the virtuous political will into fanaticism. Fanaticism may indeed grow out of personal psychopathology, but I suspect that more often it does not, that more often it involves a fateful playing out of one's political perceptions. In this sense, it is not "psychopathology" that induces politics, it is politics that induces "psychopathology." If Mr. Siegel will reread what I said about the Weathermen, he may understand the difference—the chasm—between my position and that which he ascribes to me.

There is an implication in Mr. Siegel's letter I find disturbing. He seems to argue that there *is* a connection between personality and politics, but that one ought to ignore it, since (1) history will deliver the final verdict, and (2) it will lead to psychiatric incarceration, as in the Soviet Union. Neither argument is persuasive. "History" does not render decisive judgments; it changes its mind every few years, with every shift in the cultural climate. As to the Soviet Union, it will oppress its political opposition no matter what; incarceration is one of the specialties of the house, and if it

Unsalted Mazola Margarine. It lets you cook the book. Without burning it.

How would you like a margarine that tastes as good as butter, but with none of butter's disadvantages?

That's what Unsalted Mazola Margarine is all about. It's parve, so you can use it all the time. And because it has no milk solids, it doesn't burn or smoke in the pan, like butter does. Even people with milk allergies can enjoy it.

Unsalted Mazola Margarine is low in saturated fats, too.

So instead of using butter for one thing, and margarine for something else, why not use Unsalted Mazola Margarine for everything.

That's right. You're not losing butter. You're gaining Mazola Margarine.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The American Jewish Committee

is a nationwide membership organization of American Jews dedicated to the following purposes:

combating anti-Semitism, racism and bigotry in all their forms

protecting the rights of Jews within the framework of equality and dignity for all

supporting Israel and the cause of a just peace in the Middle East.

seeking the right of emigration for Soviet Jews

INTERESTED?

Write:
National Membership Department
THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
Institute of Human Relations
165 East 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

is not the lunatic asylum, then it will be the forced-labor camp. If there are connections, however complex, however tenuous, between personality and politics, then they should be explored, and whether one likes it or not, they will be. Would Mr. Siegel do away with Erikson's work on Gandhi, or James Barber's work on the American Presidents, or the literature on the authoritarian personality, to cite just a few examples? Would he, for that matter, do away with political biography altogether? I think not; I hope not. I think (and hope) he has simply phrased his objections carelessly. He is not against the genre, he is against poor examples of the genre. I think *Young Radicals* is one such poor example, which is why I wrote my critique.

Mr. Keniston's letter does not much advance the dispute between us, for it stands as a good example of the very habits of mind about which I complained in my essay. In its view of student violence, for example, it reminds me of the story of the borrowed pot: that it wasn't borrowed, that it already had a hole in it when it was borrowed, and so on. Thus, he argues that the Movement is fundamentally non-violent, and that only a minority is violent; that that minority is violent only because events have made it so; and that in any case the book anticipated the possibility of violence.

Well, let us look at these arguments one by one. Is it only the bad radicals who favor violence? A study done just a few months ago at Michigan tells us otherwise: a substantial majority of political and cultural radicals say they *believe* in violence (in "a noble cause," of course). No doubt only a fraction will perform it; but it is the explicit acceptance of it by the majority which disinhibits that fraction, and that was one of the points my paper stressed. Mr. Keniston tells us he could not have predicted the turn to violence since so much of it was a response to external events. But my article pointed out that many of us sensed the possibility of violence even in the halcyon days of 1965-66; there were even some, most notably Lewis Feuer, who in fact predicted the ultimate descent into terrorism. (It tells us something of the nature of current intellectual life that Feuer's astonishing prescience has earned him nothing but neglect and obloquy.) Will not Mr. Keniston conceive that the problem may lie not in "events" but in an inadequate understanding of the Movement? As to his suggestion that *Young Radicals* did not foreclose the possibility of future violence by the student Left, let me say that I find this statement just a bit disingenuous. The sentences he quotes are just about the only such in a book teeming with praise for radical non-violence; and even so, they suggest that violence, were it to come, would come only reactively. If the reader cares to pursue this matter further, I suggest he read pages 247 to 256 of *Young Radicals*, and judge for himself whether I have given a fair account of his position. All in all, as I read Mr. Keniston's letter, I get the uneasy feeling that an Orwellian memory-hole is being prepared, to which the miserable events of the past few years will be safely consigned, so that we remember nothing and learn nothing.

I do not really believe that Mr. Keniston and I differ that sharply on psychological issues. Yes, perhaps we do give somewhat different weight to intrapsychic as against interpersonal variables. But on the whole, Mr. Keniston and I are, on psychological matters, as alike as peas in a pod. The differences between us are essentially political and philosophical. The failures of observation and analysis I find in his writings on the student Left stem not from faults in psychological doctrine but from a political philosophy which does not, in my opinion, allow him to grasp what would otherwise be evident to him.

Mr. Keniston is a Pelagian in his estimate of the radical young and a Manichean in his view of American society; the young are pure and without sin, the country infectiously corrupt. This comes through plainly in his recent commencement address at Notre Dame—a document he was good enough to send me, and one which I find extraordinarily revealing. There he argues that the student movement was, in its origins (and remains, in its majority), free of evil, free of taint; it was later corrupted—"infected" is the word used—by that very American violence it set out to confront and oppose. Does this sound familiar? It should. It is innocence corrupted by evil; it is Adam and Eve and the Serpent and the Fall.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Seagram's V.O.
For people who make every moment count.

They seem to do everything. And they do it right. Even when it comes to having a drink. It has to be Seagram's V.O. Very special. Very Canadian. Very right. Known by the company it keeps.

Seagram's V.O. Canadian

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ARE YOU BUYING *Fake Fruit?*

In recent years a scientific literature has accumulated testifying to the undoubted cosmetic value of many natural substances when applied externally to the skin—notably fruit and vegetable juices.

Unfortunately, this information has set the groundwork for the ubiquitous operators of the fast buck. A miasma of "natural" preparations have appeared which, to put it bluntly, are complete frauds. Cucumber preparations made with "cucumbers" that never grew—creams and lotions with "peaches" that never even saw the inside of a can—"strawberry" soaps, oils, facials, emulsions, masks, and what have you—all strictly out of the chemist's beaker, etc. etc. ad nauseam, with every "natural" ingredient one can conjure up.

As so many of our patrons know, we have for many decades featured a group of Cucumber cosmetics actually containing the genuine article.

Now, to bring a further sense of responsibility into this area of fantasy-quackery, we are introducing three bona fide, natural moisture creams.

These, we guarantee, are absolutely the real thing. They are designated under the copyrighted name of CERTI-NATURAL® as evidence that our pharmacists have incorporated into these creams the actual, pure substance indicated—derived from its natural source—in a definite proportion—as certified on the label.

CERTI-NATURAL® CREAMS

4 ounce $5.00 16 ounce $15.00

PEACH in a super-rich, whipped cream base for *dry skin*

BANANA in a bland, easily absorbable base for *normal skin*

STRAWBERRY in a delicate, emollient base for *oily skin*

As one of the originators of genuine, natural beauty aids—our testimonials hark back to Sarah Bernhardt, Lillian Russell, Adelina Patti and beyond—we are proud to present these unequivocal, truly natural creams.

All major charge cards accepted.
Kindly include charge number.
Visit our historic pharmacy at
518 Lexington Ave. (48th St.)
or send $1.00 for two issues of our
unique catalog. Sorry, no C.O.D.

CASWELL-MASSEY CO. LTD. ★ EST. 1752

★ AMERICA'S OLDEST ★ NEW YORK, N.Y. 10014

CERTI-NATURAL® MOISTURE CREAMS

(Check Skin type, size & quantity required)

SKIN TYPE	SIZES		QTY.
Dry	___ 4oz. @ $5	___ 16oz. @ $15	___ ___
Normal	___	___	___ ___
Oily	___	___	___ ___

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

COM-101

CHEMISTS & PERFUMERS ★ 320 W. 13th ST.

Committed to this Edenic view of the Movement, Mr. Keniston has been unable to perceive its tragic fault—and that is its easy acquiescence to the totalitarian spirit. The turn to violence is only one side of that acquiescence, only the most palpable and by no means the most worrisome. More worrisome by far is the indifference—the utter insouciance—with which it regards the absence of political freedom in the nations of the totalitarian Left. Some of this is no doubt due to simple naiveté—among much of the student Left Cuba, for example, is seen as a vast and well-organized hippie commune, filled with happy peasants singing folk songs—some of it is that special kind of callousness we see in those who pursue a dream of perfect justice. Most worrisome of all is the fact that the gullible and obsessed are led, increasingly, by very hard types indeed—hack theoreticians and bureaucrats-in-waiting, little Molotovs and Zhdanovs—the sort who, were they to fulfill their visions of power, would clap Mr. Keniston in jail, offering him homilies about omelets and broken eggs. My friend Kenneth Keniston should recognize all of this even better than I do, for he was recently pilloried, in perfect *Pravda*-like language, by one of the influential organs of the young radical movement.

I am most troubled by Mr. Keniston's Manichean view of America and its institutions. Perhaps I do him some injustice here, for I am sure he would be able to cite passages from his writings which attest to a more balanced view of American society. But in the writing before me, in the address at Notre Dame, he does not speak of America except in the context of evil: It is America's "persistent evils," its "many evils," to which he alludes again and again. It is this view of America, as sick, corrupt, rotten to the core, which nourishes the apocalyptic yearnings of the radical young. If we define our problems as evils, we are tempted to turn away from the politics which alone will solve them; for we do not solve evils, we extirpate them. No doubt Mr. Keniston would not so reason; but less disciplined, less rational souls will. Since America is evil, then why not bomb, burn, and assassinate? Why not indeed? I know Kenneth Keniston would never so intend. I know him to be a good

LICENSED TO UMI-GRG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and gentle person. Yet unwittingly he adds to the climate of "dogmatism and death" on the Left which his address so eloquently decries. It is one more example of the ambiguity of moral virtue.

Action Painting

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

This is just to correct a few errors of fact and terminology in the references to me in Daniel Bell's "Sensibility in the 60's" [June]. Perhaps on another occasion I shall comment on Mr. Bell's general thesis.

The quotation from my remarks on Robert Morris should read: "Aesthetic withdrawal . . . legitimizes 'process' art . . . and random art whose form and content are decided by chance" (not "divided by chance").

In the next paragraph Mr. Bell says that "A decade after his initial—and, at the time, approving—explication of 'gestural' or 'process' art Rosenberg was now clearly a shade unhappy at the strident stage which this tendency had reached." "The American Action Painters," to which Mr. Bell refers, and from which he quotes, was published in *Art News* in 1951 or 1952, that is, about *two* decades (not *a* decade) before my observations on Morris. The "sensibility" of the action painters dominated the art of the 50's. But Mr. Bell's references, both in quoting from my essay and in speaking of *a* decade, make it seem as if these artists and my description of them first appeared in the 60's. Since he is writing about "the 60's" as distinct from the 50's this apparently trivial, and no doubt unintentional, mistake becomes crucial.

"The American Action Painters" was not "an explication of 'gestural' or 'process' art," which did not exist in 1952. My essay formulated the idea of *action* painting which is based on an entirely different principle from either gesture or process. The first chapter of my new book *Act and the Actor* is devoted to the distinction between action and process. Action has to do with decision and self-affirmation or self-creation, while process operates of itself, as in the examples of process art cited by Dr. Bell. (Though I used the word "gesture" in regard to the action painters I prefer the term "action" because it implies a concrete content, where-

on her gala winter cruise season to the Caribbean

Discover, joyfully, that the art of elegant living has not disappeared. That the "grand hotel" concept of the past era, with its impeccable service and total dedication to your well-being, is still with us. Recapture it all this winter on a Caribbean cruise of the 39,241-ton OCEANIC, where the superbly trained Italian personnel takes pride and pleasure in making you feel you are to the manor born.

Side by side with this gracious way of life, you'll thrill to the OCEANIC's lavish winter program of activities. 4 orchestras and a roving pianist-vocalist, professional variety shows and continental revues, movies and lectures, parties and galas, ship and shore golf directed by PGA great "Lighthorse" Harry Cooper and officially sponsored bridge games. Every possible modern pleasure facility is here . . . from TV and attended Saunas to the indoor-outdoor Lido pool deck under the retractable, glass Magrodome roof. All cabins have private bathroom, telephone, 2-channel stereo music, individual climate controls.

Starting Dec. 18 . . .
8 Elegant Cruises to the West Indies & South America

Dec. 18, 15 days, 7 ports, from $715 • Jan. 3, 11 days, 5 ports, from $500 • Jan. 15, 14 days, 6 ports, from $635 • Jan. 30, 18 days, 7 ports • from $815 • Feb. 19, 15 days, 6 ports, from $680 • Mar. 6, 12 days, 6 ports, from $545 • Mar. 19, 10 days, 4 ports, from $455 • Mar. 30, 9 days, 3 ports, from $410

Minimum rates subject to availability
All sailings from New York
All-Italian Crew — Panamanian Registry

HOME LINES

CONSULT YOUR TRAVEL AGENT

42 Broadway, N.Y. 10004 Tel. 425-1515 Offices in Principal Cities

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as "gesture" may be empty or symbolic.) The point is that the action painters opposed various types of determinism which had been prevalent in American painting and should not be amalgamated with determinists such as the process artists.

HAROLD ROSENBERG
Chicago, Illinois

DANIEL BELL writes:

1) I regret the error in transcription which substituted "divided" for "decided."

2) I knew that Mr. Rosenberg had first published his essay in *Art News* in the early 50's and the manuscript from which the essay was taken makes the original context clear in the footnotes. The COMMENTARY article did not carry citations and other scholarly paraphernalia.

But Mr. Rosenberg reprinted his essay in 1959 in *The Tradition of the New* and curiously makes no mention of the original date of publication, though the essay itself carries extended footnotes from other of his articles in 1958 and 1959 which elaborated his argument. His own inadvertence, certainly, will make it difficult for a future, unwary critic to date Mr. Rosenberg's point of view.

In any event, it is clear from the context that I was not using the "action painters" as part of the sensibility of the 60's but as a baseline. I would even assume that Mr. Rosenberg's act of publishing his essays as a book in 1959—and he surely is aware of the nature of a public act—was part of the effort to establish action painting as the threshold of the new developments.

3) But to come to the one question of substance: Mr. Rosenberg argues that *action* painting is different from *gestural* art, even though he has several times approvingly used the idea of the gesture. ("The gesture on the canvas was a gesture of liberation, from Value—political, aesthetic, moral.") The problem is one of standpoint. From a Moslem point of view, all Christians are alike, whatever the doctrinal differences among the warring sects. My argument was that action painting—which Mr. Rosenberg himself made explicit—had begun *the destruction of the art object*, and that the painters who followed in the 1960's almost completed that task. I think that Mr. Rosenberg's own essays, originally in *Art News* and subsequently in the *New Yorker*, make that progression—or degeneration—abundantly clear.

My overall argument dealt with a change in sensibility which had rejected the idea of objective value, and it is within that context, and from that standpoint, that I traced the relation between action painting and its successors. I await with interest Mr. Rosenberg's comment on the general thesis.

The New Journalism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "The Presidency & the Press" [March] Daniel P. Moynihan inveighed against the press because it makes being President awkward. Not until July were there answers, and then only two from members of the press [Letters from Readers, July]. Perhaps only two of them seemed worth publishing; but suppose there were only two answers? Could it be that the working journalists of America could not work up sufficient choler to care? They know they are out of date, even if Mr. Moynihan doesn't.

Mr. Moynihan objects to the press because it tells the public more about the Presidency than it ought to know. He told us that the Pentagon Papers were "stolen goods" before we—or he!—knew they existed. This proves intellectuals are smarter than lawyers. Attorney General Mitchell didn't refer to stolen goods until the New York *Times* told him that there were such things as Pentagon Papers.

Where is news made? Mr. Moynihan thinks it is made in the Washington *Post* and the New York *Times*, and hints without saying so that the President thinks so, too. Max Frankel, the bureau manager, and Elie Abel, the journalism-school dean, also think so. But a journalism school is an institution; so is a Washington bureau; so is the Presidency. Institutions by definition must be defended.

But the people are stirred by night. The true New Journalism is the New Show Business. Middle America is being hit below the Borscht Belt, and it's a big hit. Inside every Jan Murray there is a Barry Gray struggling to emerge. That explains ninety minutes of Daniel Ellsberg on the Dick Cavett show, and both of them edified by it. . . .

JEWISH ART TREASURES

Available Only Through Commentary

THE OLD SYNAGOGUE

by Jules Halfant

An original collotype in sepia and green-gold on a rich ivory sheet.
Edition limited to 200 impressions, individually numbered and signed by the artist.
16" x 22" on a 21½" x 35" sheet.
This beautiful work is an evocative rendition of a disappearing aspect of Jewish life, here captured forever by the artist's vision and skill.

Born and raised in New York City's Lower East Side, Jules Halfant attended the National Academy of Design, and now lives in Brooklyn. He has traveled widely in pursuit of his passion — fine Jewish art.

$35 including special packaging, postage, and insurance.

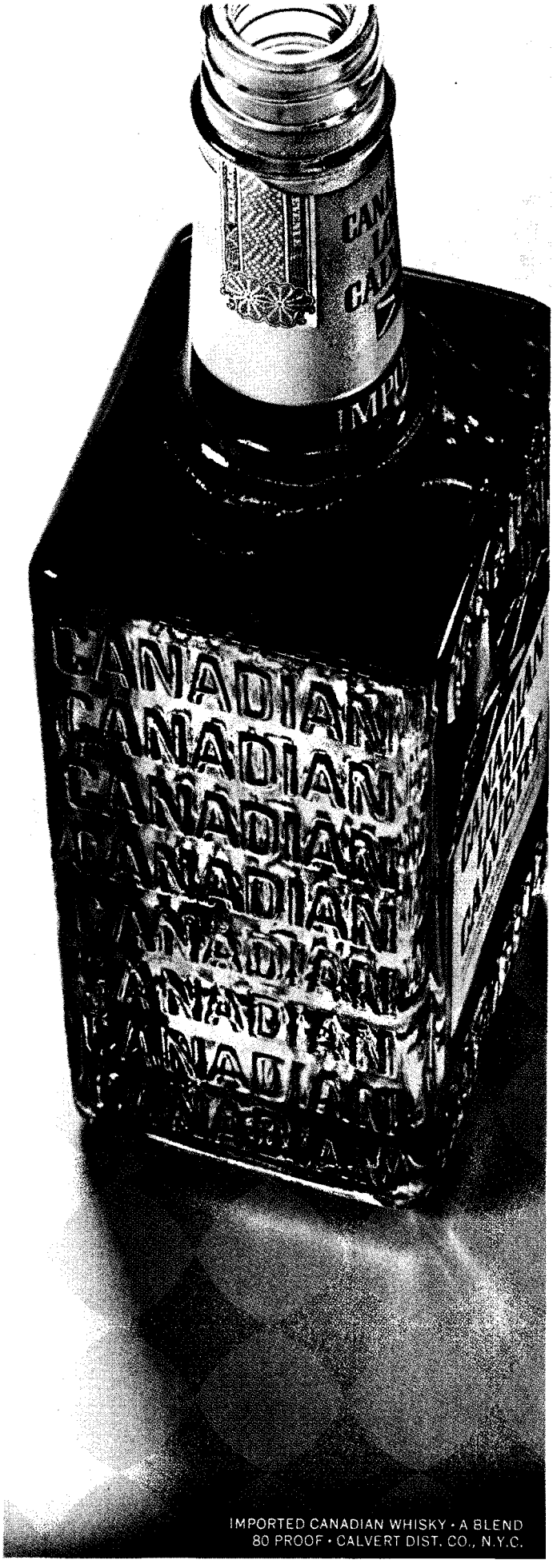
To: **COMMENTARY ART TREASURES** 165 East 56th Street, N.Y., N.Y. 10022

I have enclosed my check for $_____ to cover the cost of *The Old Synagogue* @ $35. apiece. This includes postage and insurance. If I am not completely satisfied, I may return this work in good condition, insured, within ten days, and you will send me a prompt refund.

Name_____
Address_____
City_____
State_____ Zip_____ H

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Being Canadian isn't everything.



All Canadian whisky is good.

We know, because we've been making good whiskies up in Canada for years.

But it took all our expertise and almost all our patience to come up with a great one:

Canadian Lord Calvert, a perfect blend of the finest whiskies in Canada from our five different distilleries.

You see, just being Canadian isn't everything. Being Canadian Lord Calvert is.

Canadian Lord Calvert

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

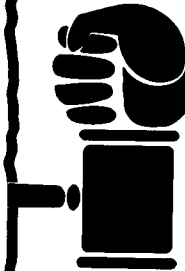
"Does an Italian wine go with Corned Beef and Cabbage?"

Bolla does.

TO CUT THE CORN AND ADD A TOUCH OF SOPHISTICATION, TRY BOLLA ROSÉ.
©1971 THE JOS. GARNEAU CO., N.Y.C.

Nine of America's foremost lawyers and social critics analyze the meaning of legal order in America

Howard Zinn
Edgar Z. Friedenberg
Robert Paul Wolff
Daniel J. Boorstin
Anthony F. C. Wallace
Stanley Diamond
Ronald Dworkin
Lon L. Fuller
Richard Barnet



THE RULE OF LAW

Edited by Robert Paul Wolff

Cloth $6.95; paperback $2.95

SIMON AND SCHUSTER

News is made for the middle-class, middle-educated insomniac by a quintessential—if minority—show-business type; the superficially Yiddishized Wasp, as embarrassing at it as a white jazz musician trying to be black. His Loch Sheldrake is Las Vegas; his I.Q. is high and he learned golf from his father.

The Kennedys went on the Paar show, and those transcripts, if printed in the *Times*, would give them the same role in the history of American journalism as those other Papers did in the Westernization of Southeast Asia.

On screen the major-domo, renowned for quick answers in Midwestern syllables which puncture fading stars and draw jokes out of the memories of lady singers. Enter the Man of Affairs. No puncturing here. I am honored, said Joey Bishop to Ronnie Reagan. You are kind to have me, was the gracious reply. Only Bob Hope, peddling his next movie, gets lubricated like those who wander into night-talk from the news pages.

Why would Dean Rusk rather talk to Barbara Walters than be interviewed?

At home, the lady Bachelor of Arts, whose last academic reading was her yearbook. . . . She fantasizes conversations she would be too tongue-tied to pursue with the people one learns about in Reston and Marquis Childs. And there they are, on the glass face, talking to someone from Nebraska. New media are born this way. . . .

The Barry's, Gray and Farber . . . are for the bedroom, where the sexist master smokes and dozes.

Gone the way of the prostitute by profession is the reporter by profession. There is no further need for him who goes to where the treaty is signed, the needle is plunged, the rifle is fired, the subpoena is served, the switch is thrown. Information follows Dean Martin and Marcus Welby. Set a few chairs within camera range so Men Who Know Better can launch their briefs at the sleepless bourgeoisie.

Who, any more, would see the joke if Herbert Marcuse would talk to Johnny Carson following Dionne Warwick and preceding Shecky Green? And yet it is not established that they realize, Ellsberg or Agnew, a Kennedy or a Herb Klein, Bismarck or Lassalle, that it is Johnny Carson who is the Important One.

David Frost not only swivels chairs with the Top Verbalizers, but his accent is British. This is important for the same reason that once apartment houses were named for English counties, and now the streets in suburban tracts are. Not accident but logic sends David Frost to headline at the Concord.

Thus Nature imitates Commercial Art.

JACOB SHOMER

New York City

The Dybbuk-Archetype

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "The Figure of the Dybbuk" [April] Harold Fisch erroneously states that a Dybbuk obsessed Gemulah, the heroine of S. Y. Agmon's story "Edo and Enam." . . . Mr. Fisch also compares Agnon's "Edo and Enam" with S. An-sky's play *The Dybbuk*.

The only parallel between *The Dybbuk* and "Edo and Enam" is the fact that the heroines of both works, Leah in *The Dybbuk* and Gemulah in "Edo and Enam," psychologically resisted men they were neither in love with nor destined to marry. In *The Dybbuk* Hanan was promised to Leah, and Leah to Hanan, and what was apparently destined in Heaven could not be changed by man, so Leah joined her lover in death. The symbol used by An-sky was the Dybbuk, a Kabbalistic symbol with origins, according to Gershom Scholem, in the Indian philosophy of Dharma, which deals with the transmigration of the soul.

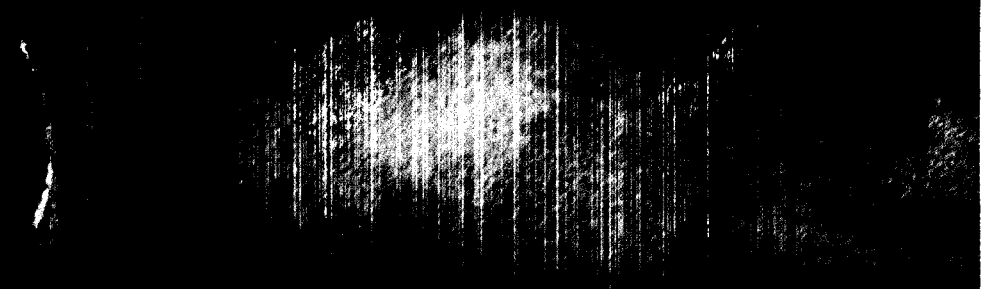
Agnon does not use the symbol of the Dybbuk at all in "Edo and Enam"; instead it is the mystical *segulah* which permeates the story, and controls the destiny of his heroine, the moon-stricken Gemulah. . . . Gamzu married Gemulah although she was destined to be married to Ginat. Gemulah's father warned Gamzu that Gemulah was moon-stricken and gave him three *segulot*, charms, which he implored Gamzu to guard since one of them had the power to control Gemulah's somnambulism. But Gamzu carelessly sold the *segulot* to Ginat, thus uniting Gemulah with her true lover Ginat. . . .

Although it is true that the symbolism of both An-sky and Agnon is mystical, the actual symbols they use, as I have tried to show here, are entirely different. . . .

I would also like to point out to Mr. Fisch that the revenants which appear in secular literature do not derive from the Dybbuk-archetype

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In 1003 A.D., the Vikings discovered America.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In 1972 A.D., America discovers the Vikings.

One day next summer, America will discover what the sea is really all about.

From people who have known for over a thousand years: The Vikings of Norway.

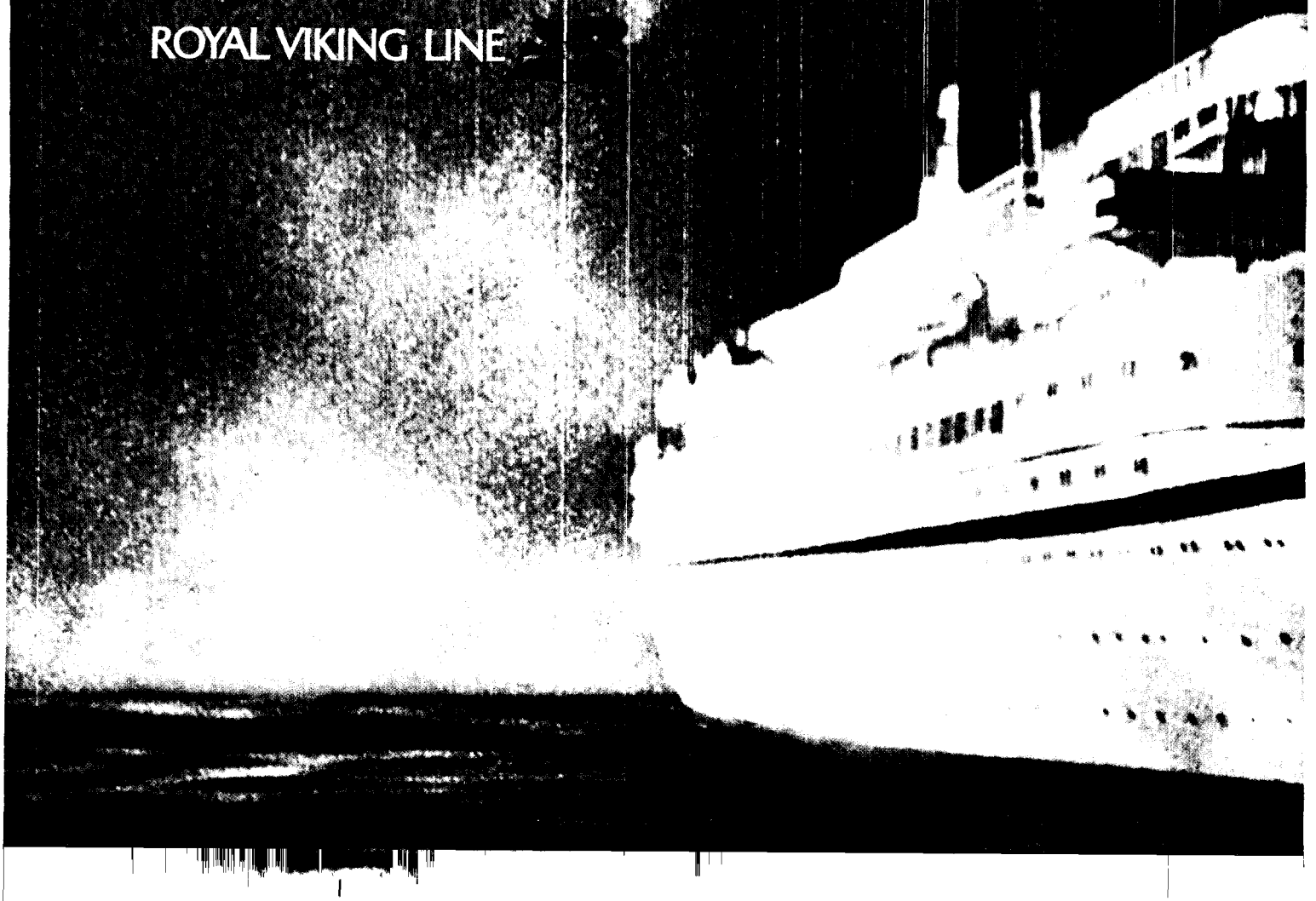
For on that day, The Royal Viking Line sets sail. With the first of three identical, first-class ships, all new, all Norwegian, all *now*.

To spirit voyagers north of the equator. South of it. East, west, across the seven seas. In short: to adventure, wherever it awaits.

For each Royal Viking is built from hull to high mast with just one goal: to bring to cruising more excitement, more enrichment than anything else afloat.

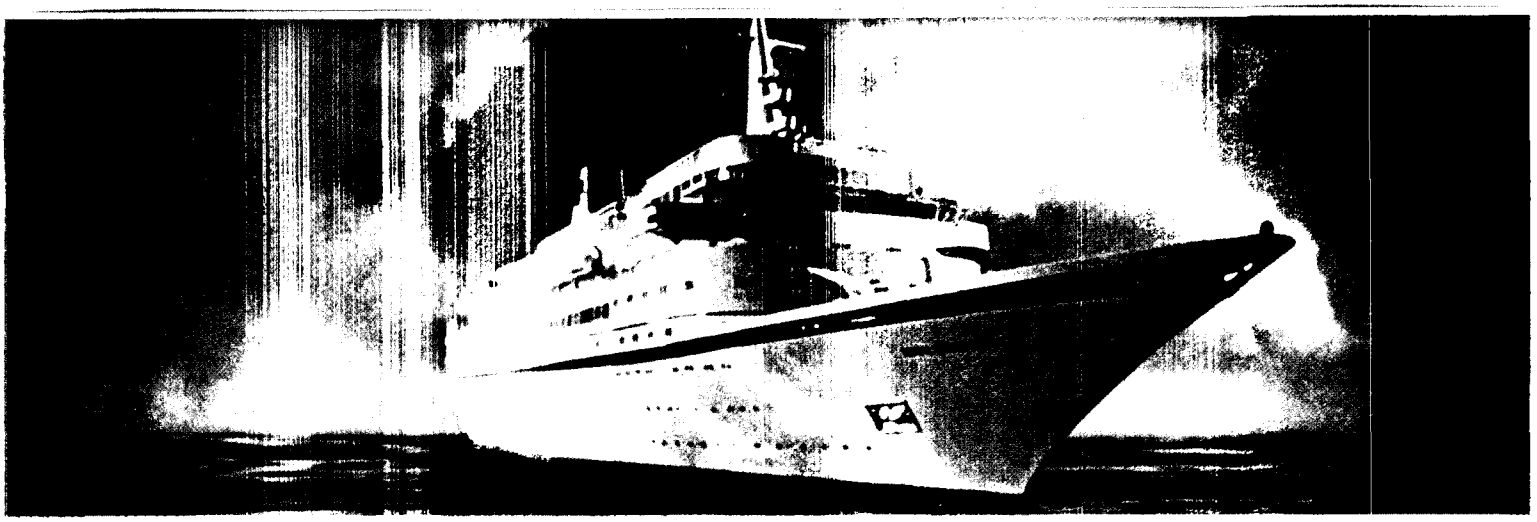
The Royal Viking Line. Turn the page—and make your own discoveries right now.

ROYAL VIKING LINE



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



When will the Royal Vikings sail?
The Royal Viking *Star*, first of three identical sister ships, hoists anchor on July 21, 1972. Maiden Voyage: a 14-day odyssey from Copenhagen to Norway's North Cape. Ships two and three complete the fleet in 1973.

Where will they sail from? And where will they go?
Here's the chart we've charted for the first year:

1. Two North Cape cruises round-trip from Copenhagen: one to Norway's outpost at the top of the world. The second even farther north to Spitsbergen...both the land of the midnight sun! Sights to see at sea: heartstopping fjords, glittering glaciers, millions of arctic birds, walrus, seal, polar bear and the like. We'll cruise the loveliest fjords, stop at the most scenic towns and, in sum, show you the midnight sun as it's never been seen before.
Each cruise is for 14 days, departing July 21, 1972 and August 4, 1972.

2. Russia/Europe...a capital idea: a voyage to some of Europe's most fascinating capitals! Like legendary Leningrad...an optional excursion to Moscow...Stockholm, Amsterdam...romantic Lisbon! And, at journey's end...the Vikings discover America—all over again.
26 days, departing Copenhagen, August 19, 1972 to New York.

3. Mediterranean...The Vikings search for the autumn sun! And discover it shining warmly on the Riviera...a hideaway called Málaga...the ageless isles of Greece. And up ahead is a hint of Africa in Casablanca...a tropical island called Madeira...and a restful journey home. Five shining weeks of sea and sun.
35 days, departing New York, September 15, 1972. Return New York.

4. Intercoastal/Caribbean...Add Mexico to the Caribbean and the Vikings come up with a fabulous cruise: the Dutch atmosphere of Curacao...the African undercurrent of Haiti...the incredible Panama Canal! Then the other side: the incomparable Acapulco... the fishing off Mazatlan...really two sumptuous cruises in one!
21 days, departing New York, October 21, 1972, Ft. Lauderdale October 24, 1972, on to Los Angeles and San Francisco.

5. West Coast/Caribbean...the Vikings take a longer look at the Caribbean and Mexico: Puerto Vallarta for peace...Caracas for action...Montego Bay for the British touch...and everywhere, emerald islands and pleasure-loving people. Add in the Canal and Acapulco for good measure!
32 days, departing Los Angeles November 10, 1972 and San Francisco November 12, 1972, and return.

6. California Coast...four fabulous, fleeting days from San Francisco to Baja California's Ensenada...a mini-cruise of sun and sea... and non-stop fun (or non-stop resting) all the way! Four days tasting "the grand life"!
4 days, departing San Francisco, December 14, 1972, and return.

7. Holiday in Mexico...Ole! A seagoing fiesta as the Royal Vikings celebrate Christmas and New Year's south of the border! All the warmest ports on the West Coast: Mazatlan, Puerto Vallarta, Manzanillo, Acapulco—in a happy holiday mood!
16 days, departing San Francisco December 18, 1972, and Los Angeles December 19, 1972, and return.

8. South Seas...a whole new world of cruising...of lovely beaches, green and black volcanoes, luxuriant jungle, and shimmering waterfalls. All the most pacific islands in the whole wide Pacific... and the Vikings know where the beauty is! In places like Moorea, New Zealand, Pago Pago, the Great Barrier Reef. Add Sydney and you have yourself the South Pacific!
46 days, departing Los Angeles January 2, 1973 and San Francisco January 4, 1973, and return.

9. Circle Pacific...another, longer look at the wide Pacific: Many of the same lovely ports, then on to Bali, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapc ...the intrigue and strange beauty of the Far East. The Vikings take a full 66 days to discover with you every nook and cranny of our largest ocean...the cruise for those who think they've seen it all.
66 days, departing Los Angeles February 18, 1973 and San Francisco February 20, 1973, and return.

10. Caribbean/Europe...more of the world in 37 days than you thought possible! Just listen to the places: Acapulco, Montego Ba Nassau, Madeira, Lisbon, Southampton, Amsterdam, Hamburg, and Copenhagen...it's like seeing three worlds at once!
37 days departing San Francisco April 28, 1973, and Los Angeles April 29, 1973, and Ft. Lauderdale May 15, 1973, to Copenhagen.

What about sea/air and fly-cruise combinations?
You name them, we'll have them for practically every cruise we've shown above.

What do the Royal Vikings cost?
They cost us over $70 million. But in 52 of our outside double staterooms, for example, the cost to you is only $65 per person per day. Others more or less. Including all meals, facilities, entertainme

How many staterooms in all?
289—including four suites, 35 deluxes, 211 doubles, 39 singles. Rooms aplenty for 539 adventurers, all in lower beds. And 94% can see the sea. And 58 rooms convert, via connecting doors, into *two*-bedroom staterooms.

What are the staterooms like? And the public rooms?
Fantastic. Every room has: built-in bar, closed circuit TV installed or available, private phone, shower and/or tub, and Scandinavian furnishings. The public rooms? Like a seagoing exhibit of Scandinavi design; a posh lounge, spacious dining room, a nifty night spot for skål...or rock and roll! A sky bar, boutiques, cinema, a seagoin gym! Even a Viking-style sauna. And outside, a dance floor, tennis courts, and heated pool.
And the crew includes temperamental chefs, a tactful maitre d'hotel discreet attendants from the entire continent of Europe. And the m who man the ships? *Norwegian,* through and through.

How do I book Royal Viking?
Just see your travel agent, the man who's made a profession of knowing cruising, fore and aft. (When it comes to facts and figures he's very seaworthy!) Or call 800-227-4246. Toll free, anywhere in the continental U.S. (From Northern California, and Canada, 415-398-8000. Southern California, 213-627-1365. Collect.)

To: Cruise Consultant
Royal Viking Line
Department A-25
One Embarcadero Center
San Francisco, CA 94111

ROYAL VIKING LINE

The Vikings intrigue me. Please send your 1972-73 Cruise and Fare Schedule and folder on these cruises: ☐ North Cape, ☐ Russia/ Europe, ☐ Mediterranean, ☐ Intercoastal/Caribbean, ☐ West Coast/Caribbean, ☐ California Coast, ☐ Mexico Holiday, ☐ South Seas, ☐ Circle Pacific, ☐ Caribbean/Europe.

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

My Travel Agent's name is _____

All Royal Viking Line vessels will be of Norwegian registry. And spirit.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Why The Library of Political Affairs is for you

Because politics is at the core and center of contemporary life. Because politics is where the action (or the agonizing inaction) is. Because you can't wake or walk on this earth without being affected.

The Library of Political Affairs gives you *both* the views you need — the overall view and the view in depth. By experts, participants, qualified analysts.

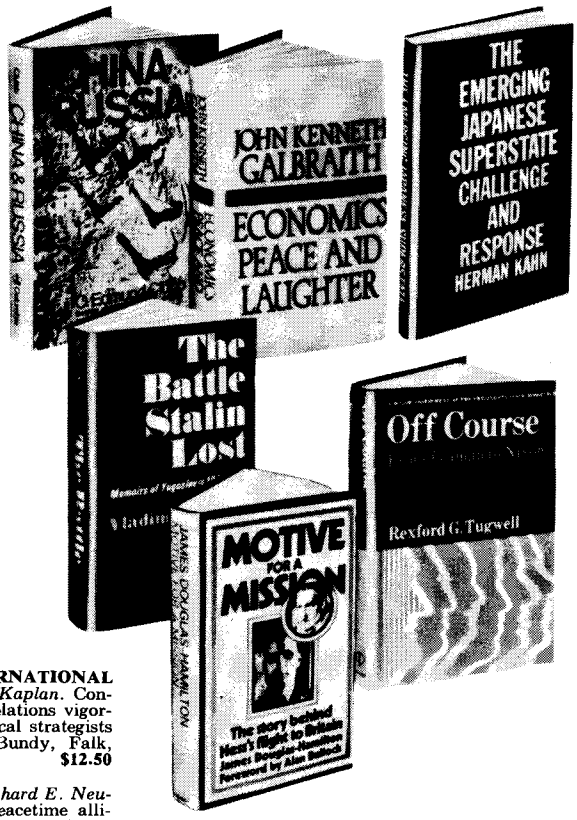
All books are yours at substantial savings — up to 30% off regular prices, occasionally more. Bonus books, too. Books you must read. Books you will want to own. Why not get them now?

Take any 3 books for only $1

(values to $39.45)

with a brief trial membership in

The Library of Political Affairs



Retail prices shown for each book.

20610. DECISION. *Richard Harris.* The step-by-step inside story of the battle in Congress and in the White House for and against the appointment of G. Harrold Carswell to the Supreme Court. **$5.95**

18580. DIVINE DISOBEDIENCE: Profiles in Catholic Radicalism. *Francis du Plessix Gray.* A richly informed account of a modern phenomenon: the conscience of dissenters within the Catholic Church, covering such controversial spirits as the Berrigan Brothers, Ivan Illich, and David Kirk of Emmaus House. **$6.95**

61630. McNAMARA: His Ordeal in the Pentagon. *Henry L. Trewhitt.* The diplomatic correspondent of *Newsweek* examines the trials of the computer mind versus the monoliths of the Pentagon, and some of the dinosaurs in Congress. The facts, the anecdotes, and some unexpected conclusions. **$7.95**

69940. THE POLITICS OF DISORDER. *Theodore J. Lowi.* A distinguished political scientist studies the confrontations, hysteria and confusions of our time, and probes to discover whether or not they are needed to produce a more rational order, in a series of brilliant, thoughtful vignettes. **$6.95**

65180. OFF COURSE: From Truman to Nixon. *Rexford G. Tugwell.* A prize-winning political analyst presents a hard-hitting assessment of how our presidents have reacted to and shaped events since the death of Roosevelt. **$7.95**

81010. STUDIES IN WAR AND PEACE. *Michael Howard.* The noted English military historian surveys 200 years of military history and theory in a brilliant assessment of the realities — and failure — of war as an extension of politics. **$8.95**

37610. CZECHOSLOVAKIA SINCE WORLD WAR II. *Tad Szulc.* Untangling the web of recent Czechoslovak history — through the 1968 Soviet invasion and its implications for world power alignments. **$14.00**

84390. TO THE VICTOR: Political Patronage from the Clubhouse to the White House. *Martin and Susan Tolchin.* How American politics really works — and why we have the kinds of governments (federal, state, local) that we do. **$7.95**

37940. CHINA AND RUSSIA: THE GREAT GAME. *O. Edmund Clubb.* A major authority's compelling account of Sino-Russian relations over the centuries; this fascinating full-scale political history puts current disputes into perspective. *Just published.* **$12.95**

50550. GREAT ISSUES OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS. *Edited by Morton A. Kaplan.* Controversial issues in international relations vigorously thrashed out by noted political strategists and critics: Kissinger, Church, Bundy, Falk, Fulbright, others. **$12.50**

32510. ALLIANCE POLITICS. *Richard E. Neustadt.* Probing the dynamics of peacetime alliances, through a fascinating exploration of personalities and events in two major crises — Suez and "Skybolt." **$5.95**

84810. TRUTH AND POWER: Essays of a Decade, 1960-1970. *Hans J. Morgenthau.* A leading political thinker takes the pulse of the last decade and relates the underlying political, moral issues to future needs. **$10.00**

69920. THE POLITICS OF UNREASON: Right Wing Extremism in America, 1790-1970. *Seymour M. Lipset and Earl Rabb.* Brilliantly interprets and documents the interworking of historical motifs and right-wing movements. Winner of the first $10,000 Gunnar Myrdal Prize. **$12.50**

32740. THE AMERICAN CORPORATION: Its Power, Its Money, Its Politics. *Richard Barber.* Brisk analysis of how the unprecedented growth and new directions of the American corporation is affecting our political and democratic institutions. **$7.95**

43410. ECONOMICS, PEACE & LAUGHTER. *John Kenneth Galbraith.* One of the nation's leading economists sums up the new developments in his thinking — to provide you with an economic survival kit. **$7.95**

35570. THE BATTLE STALIN LOST: Memoirs of Yugoslavia 1948-1953. *Vladimir Dedijer.* How Yugoslavia manoeuvered to keep its independence from Russia. **$8.50**

44490. THE EMERGING JAPANESE SUPERSTATE. *Herman Kahn.* The controversial head of the Hudson Institute examines the Japanese economic miracle and its global implications. **$7.95**

37460. THE CHALLENGE OF WORLD POVERTY. *Gunnar Myrdal.* An influential and far-sighted political economist outlines specific new approaches to world poverty — based on a thorough analysis of where the old programs went wrong. **$8.95**

69870. POWER. *A. A. Berle.* The most systematic anatomy of the realities and exercises of power, and the most comprehensive theory since Machiavelli's. **$10.00**

63140. MOTIVE FOR A MISSION: *James Douglas-Hamilton.* "Absolutely excellent."— *Hugh Trevor-Roper.* A unique view of the geo-political theory and personal ambiguities behind Hess's bizarre flight to Britain — includes material never available before. **$8.95**

69840. PRESENT AT THE CREATION. *Dean Acheson.* Pulitzer Prize-winning book on the shaping of the post-war world, by one of its chief architects. **$12.50**

TRIAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The Library of Political Affairs F-388
Riverside, N.J. 08075

Upon acceptance of this offer, please enroll me as a trial member and send the three books whose numbers I've filled in below. Bill me just $1 for all three, plus a small shipping and handling charge. If not delighted, I will return all books within 10 days and my membership will be cancelled. As a trial member, I need accept as few as 3 more selections during the next 12 months, always at reduced member prices plus shipping and handling, and I may cancel membership any time thereafter. Each month, I will receive advance reviews describing the forthcoming selections, along with a convenient form for requesting alternate selections or no book at all. I understand I may choose a bonus book for every 4 selections purchased.

3 books for only $1: (write in numbers)

_____ _____ _____

Name _____

Address _____

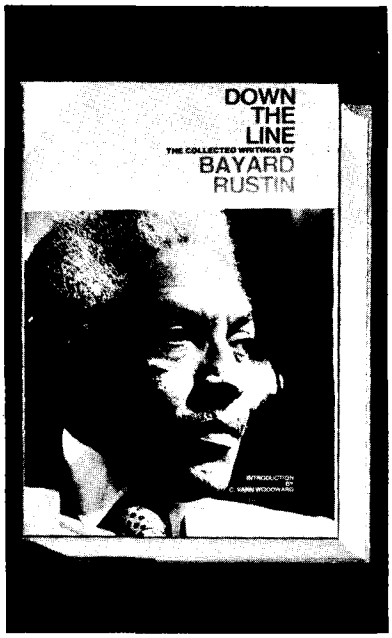
City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Offer good in Continental U.S. and Canada only.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Making of a Man . . . and a Decade



DOWN THE LINE

The Collected Writings of
Bayard Rustin
$10.00

"Down the Line is as extraordinary as the man who wrote it. For three decades Bayard Rustin has written as he has lived, with reason and compassion, logic and grace, moral force and bold wit . . . [He is] an example of how talent, when applied by one with a deep moral commitment, can change the oppressor as well as the oppressed."

— Edmund S. Muskie

COMING APART

by William L. O'Neill
An Informal History of America in the 1960's
illustrated $12.50

A whopper of a book that sums up with zap and bite the incredible pageant of the 1960's.

"O'Neill has done it — this is a perceptive, lively, exciting look into the years that we thought would never end — and probably haven't. A first-rate book that will last for a long time."

— Nicholas von Hoffman

QUADRANGLE BOOKS, INC. NYT A NEW YORK TIMES COMPANY
Chicago • New York

THE SEARCH FOR MEANING

philosophical vistas

By Alfred Stern

"Here is a welcome book not only for the philosopher, but the intelligent, perhaps worried reader, who remains confused as to what human existence is all about."

William B. Barton
The Southern Journal of Philosophy

366 pages, index $12.50

Order from your local bookseller, or Memphis State University Press, Memphis State University, Memphis, Tennessee 38111.

PIN this ad to a dollar bill **$1**

EXCITING

Make your weekends bright with this 14-week introductory subscription to a Jewish publication that treats intellectuals and the campus generation on their own level and not as dropouts from Jewish life.

The Jewish POST & OPINION
70 5TH AVE., NEW YORK 10011

"It is briskly written, pulls no punches and is American to the grass roots"—**Rabbi Robert Gordis**

. . . and certainly in Ibsen's *Ghosts* the apparition of the hero's father is strictly personal, and bears no resemblance whatsoever to a Dybbuk. Mr. Fisch might, however, have discussed the parallel between An-sky's tragedy and Paddy Chayefsky's comedy, *The Tenth Man*, in which the heroine was also possessed by a Dybbuk.

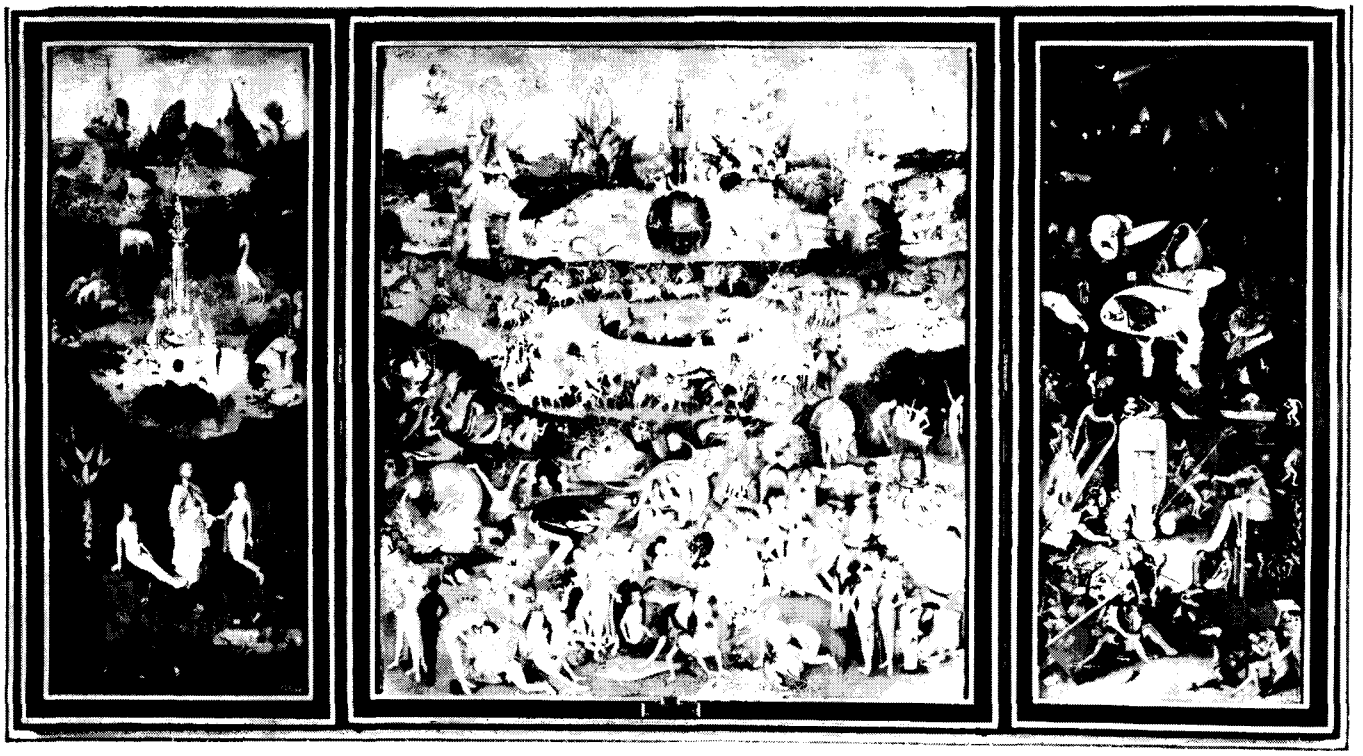
ANNABELLE FARMELANT
New York City

HAROLD FISCH writes:

Miss Farmelant is wrong. "Edo and Enam" (like Agnon's parallel tale, "The Betrothed") is fundamentally a "Dybbuk" story. The heroine in both cases is not merely possessed, but possessed by a force representing authority and prenatal obligations. Other parallels (as pointed out in my essay) are too many and too deep to be ignored. This does not mean that they were using the same archetype. Miss Farmelant does not seem to understand how archetypal criticism of the Northrop Frye variety works. Consequently she protests that "the revenants which appear in secular literature do not derive from the Dybbuk." No one ever claimed that they did. This is not a question of literary *derivation*, but of common strategies devised under the stress of similar compulsions and issuing in significantly similar patterns of narrative and drama. *Ghosts* and *The House of Seven Gables*, like *The Dybbuk* and "Edo and Enam," grapple with the problem of the burden of the past. In all of them the antinomies of terror and inspiration find expression in the form of ghostly possession, somnambulism, and the like. I am suggesting that at work here is a common archetype which I have for convenience (and I hope for truth and clarity also) termed the Dybbuk-archetype.

I have enjoyed Mr. Chayefsky's play *The Tenth Man*, but though this clearly derived from An-sky's *The Dybbuk*, it is not a Dybbuk-play in my sense of the term, since, instead of exploring the dimension of history (as do the stories I am interested in), it relates primarily to the personal level. There is a personal problem and a personal catharsis. Chayefsky's heroine, as I remember, is shown to be afflicted with schizophrenia. Once we have understood this the mystery is solved. In the true Dybbuk the abnormalities of the hero or heroine are rather symbols of a wider human predicament.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



THE GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS

by Hieronymus Bosch

This is a handsome full color reproduction of the famous 15th century tryptych, the original of which hangs in the Prado Museum in Madrid. The left panel depicts a surrealist vision of creation; secular frolic in the center; and on the right the miseries of the inferno.

P668. Beautifully lithographed 37½" x 22". *Special* **4.95**

P166. A hand-process reproduction on artists' canvas with brush stroke texture. Expertly mounted on a stretcher. *Only* **24.95**

MARBORO Dept. 105-CM
131 Varick St., New York, N.Y. 10013

Please send me the following. (Please add 75¢ postage and handling on all orders.)

- ☐ **P668 at 4.95**
- ☐ **P166 on canvas at 24.95**
- ☐ Enclosed find $_____

Charge my: (check one)

☐ Master Charge Bank name:	☐ Amer. Exp.	☐ Diners Club	☐ Carte Blanche	☐ Uni-Card

& write in your account #_____

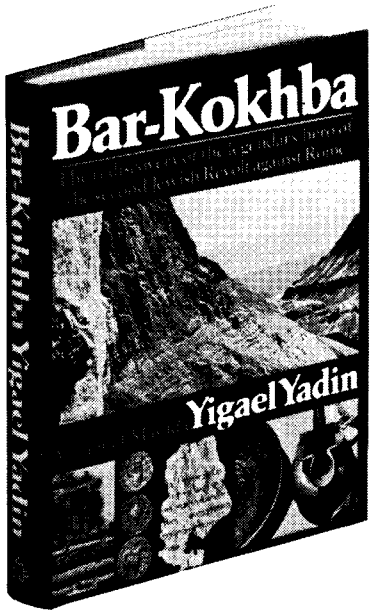
Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State ..... Zip Code .....

New York City residents add 7% city sales tax. Other New York State residents add applicable increased sales tax. If not satisfied, return order after 10 day examination and money will be cheerfully refunded.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Exciting proof that the legendary Jewish hero Bar-Kokhba really lived.

The best-selling author of Masada now tells the dramatic story of the excavations near the Dead Sea that unearthed the ancient letters of Bar-Kokhba—the Jewish guerrilla leader of the second revolt against Hadrian's Rome. Here is one of the great archeological discoveries of the 20th century, vividly re-created in a compelling narrative and 229 stunning photographs, 104 in full color.

Bar-Kokhba
by Yigael Yadin
$15, now at your bookstore
RANDOM HOUSE

Civilization

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . Theodore K. Rabb's review of Kenneth Clark's *Civilisation* [Books in Review, June] seems to me to be an example of an instance where the critic insisted on comparing apples with oranges. Mr. Rabb takes Lord Clark to task for his omissions, for his definition of "civilization," and for his failure to take into account recent scholarship; but *Civilisation* is not a text, it is an essay. It was not designed to introduce the reader to the history of art but to make interesting reading. The subject serves only as the framework upon which the writer demonstrates his skill with words.

Mr. Rabb states: "The reader might find far greater substance and understanding, presented with no less elegance, in H. W. Janson's history of art." Janson is a useful text and a good reference work, but it is dull, dull, dull. Clark is fun.

I don't think that Lord Clark actually intended to do anything but talk about art in an interesting manner to people who are not particularly interested in the subject. The success of his book is not to be denigrated. It shows that he accomplished exactly what he set out to do.

Harry J. Kanin
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . I was angered and indignant that "civilization" for Kenneth Clark begins with Christianity. What a very rude assumption. . . . The fact that Lord Clark showed clear prejudices about so many things . . . casts doubt on the whole enterprise. . . .

Ida Aber
Riverdale-on-Hudson, New York

Theodore K. Rabb writes:

Harry Kanin's letter implies that omissions, careless definitions, and indifference to recent writings (let alone inaccuracies and distortions) are acceptable if an author's concern is "to make interesting reading." Perhaps. But why should Lord Clark have sacrificed anything? Other scholars have treated scholarly subjects with no less of the devil, but without losing so much of the deep blue sea.

An Absolute Pacifist

To the Editor of Commentary:

The advantage in being an absolute pacifist, I suppose, is that I can be what responsible people would call "irresponsible." I don't have to consider what I would do if I were in Nixon's shoes, or how I can balance "realistically" my anti-authoritarianism (i.e., against opposing existing Communist structures) with my anti-militarism and non-violence. I can say that the Emperor is naked and not restrain myself worrying how that information would affect Lockheed's solvency. . . .

Norman Podhoretz writes ["A Note on Vietnamization," Issues, May]: "As one who has never believed that anything good would ever come for us or for the world from an unambiguous American defeat . . ." As a Gandhian, I too say that an unambiguous defeat for any person is painful and to be avoided. This I apply, very reluctantly, even to John Mitchell. But if our national community is cut down from its adolescent arrogance by a military defeat, might not that experience be of great value? How can we, in all responsibility, continue permitting one administration after another to force many of our wisest citizens into identifying the man in power with the best hopes and ideals of the American people? Universal franchise confers no more infallibility on the President than does Scripture on the Pope or the King of France. The citizen needs not only a considerable amount of skepticism but at least an equal amount of courage to act on that skepticism. . . .

Igal Roodenko
War Resisters League
New York City

Correction

We regret that in Lionel Trilling's "Authenticity & the Modern Unconscious" [September], several words were inadvertently dropped from the last sentence of Section I (p. 41). The sentence should read: "And perhaps the low status of narration has a significant connection with revisions of the child's relations to the family—traditionally the family has been a narrative institution, with counsel to give and a tale to tell of how things began, including the child himself."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Till sex us do part.

Remember how thrilling it was?

The passion and excitement of new found love. It probably more than made up for any lack of sexual knowledge and an understanding of each other as man and woman.

But, as time went by, did your love life together live up to your expectations? Have you begun to wonder where the *pleasure* went, or if you are the lovers you *could* be.

Misinformation, Misconception and Taboo

Recently, a leading team of sex researchers and therapists stated "With all the freedom to discuss the subject of sex, we still don't find that much increase in knowledge. The greatest cause of sexual problems is misinformation, misconception and taboo . . . 50 percent of all marriages are contending with some sexual dysfunction."

New Knowledge and Understanding

In the past decade, more research has been done — and more has been learned — in the field of human sexuality than in all previous history.

This vital new knowledge details and explains not only how our bodies function sexually and which techniques or positions are most rewarding, but why we think, feel and act the way we do.

Until now this fascinating and useful information has rarely been made available to the public. And because they lack this very important new knowledge and understanding, few adults ever realize their *full* sexual potential.

Produced by Professionals

A series of recorded lectures and narrated color films are now being produced under the auspices of a distinguished group of professionals, noted for their leadership in the field of human sexuality — for you to use in the privacy of your own home.

The combined contributions of these physicians, psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists enable Edcoa, Inc. to offer entertaining and informative films covering the *entire* spectrum of human sexual activity and behavior.

Never Available Before

This film series is designed to provide you with the sex education that was never available to you before . . . in a form unequalled by any other learning technique.

Each color film in this series is approximately 200 feet long (about 15-minutes). Each 8mm or Super-8 Edcoa film is complete with an accompanying narration and lecture, recorded on your choice of tape cassette or 12" 33-1/3 RPM record. New films in this series will be available at the rate of one per month.

Free Home Trial

You do *not* have to subscribe to the complete series to order your first film on a 10-day FREE HOME TRIAL. Simply complete the coupon below to order your first film now. If you are not completely satisfied with the film, return it within 10 days for a *full* refund.

In any event, you are under no obligation to purchase any future films.

To help you better understand how you can enjoy a new beginning of your married life through greater understanding of your mutual sexuality, fill out and mail this coupon now.

Mail no risk coupon today

Gentlemen:

Please rush me the first color film set in your series. I understand that the film set is mine for only $19.95 (N.Y. residents add 80¢ (4%) sales tax) complete with sound tape or recording. And that if I am not satisfied, I may simply return the materials to you within 10 days for a full refund. I certify that I am over 21 years old.

My check or money order for $19.95 is enclosed. ☐ Please charge my credit card. ☐

Signature _____

BankAmericard ☐ Master Charge ☐ _____ Account No. _____ Date of expiration

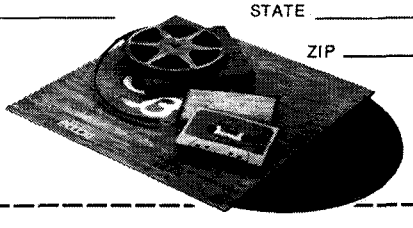
Please send me a Super-8 ☐ 8-mm ☐ film. I want the sound track to be on: (check one)
33-1/3 RPM recording ☐ Cassette tape ☐

NAME (Please print) _____

ADDRESS _____

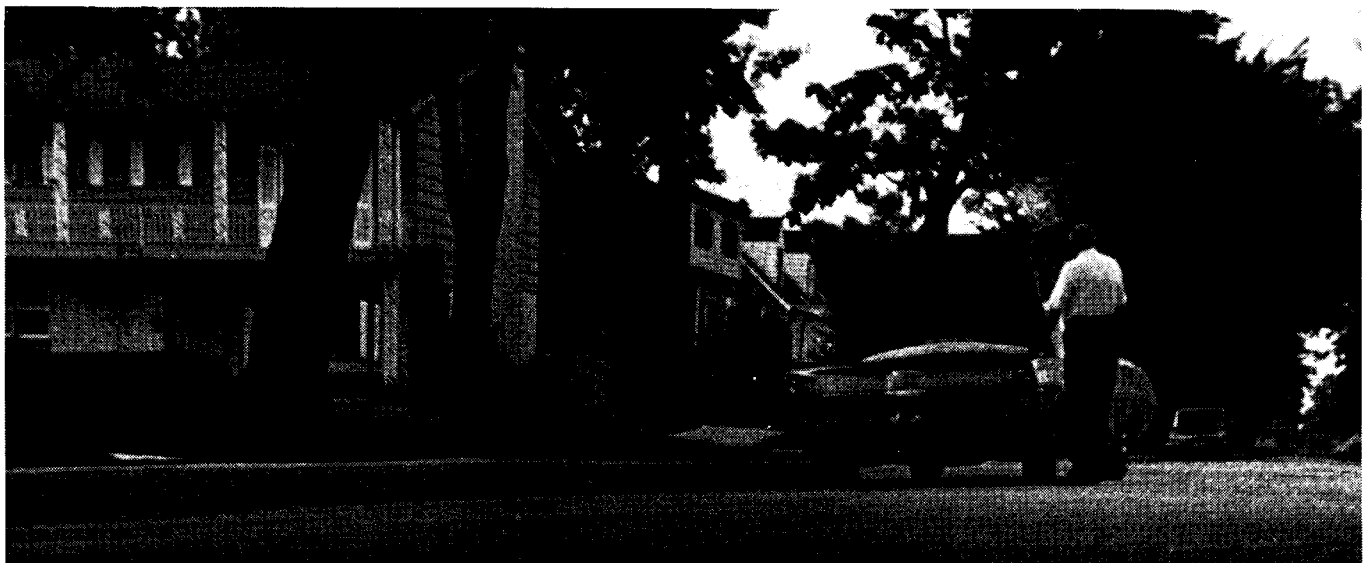
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

EDCOA INC
20 Old Nyack Turnpike
Nanuet, N. Y. 10954



C-10-71

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



NOBODY KNOWS YOU WHEN YOU NEED SOME HELP.

Remember the last time you needed a tow? Or emergency service? Or *had* to cash a check where nobody knew you?

Remember how you remembered never to let it happen again? Don't—Join the American Oil Motor Club. $15.00 a year. Pays for emergency service. Lets you cash a check up to $25.00. Covers many of those things you wish you didn't remember.

Join now. Your nearest American Oil Dealer can tell you how.

AMERICAN OIL MOTOR CLUB

AMERICAN OIL COMPANY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

America after Vietnam

Edmund Stillman

The redeeming feature of war is that it puts a nation to the test. As exposure to the atmosphere reduces mummies to instant dissolution, so war passes extreme judgment on social systems that have outlived their vitality.
—Karl Marx, *The Eastern Question*

THE President of the United States, though he is not a man known for a reflective turn of mind, has lately been directing his thoughts—as his namesake Richard II was represented by Shakespeare to have done—to "sad stories of the death of kings" and indeed, in Mr. Nixon's case, to the death of entire empires. Speaking last summer in Kansas City, Missouri to the American press, Mr. Nixon touched on Greece and Rome. "I think of what happened to Greece and Rome, and you see what is left—only the pillars," he said. "What has happened, of course, is that great civilizations of the past, as they have become wealthy, as they have lost their will to live, to improve, they then have become subject to the decadence that eventually destroys the civilization. . . . The United States," he concluded somberly, "is now reaching that period." But America would, he hoped, find the strength to go on—"the strength out through this heartland and across this nation that will see to it that America not only is rich and strong, but that it is healthy in terms of moral and spiritual strength." America, he believed, would shoulder the responsibilities thrust upon it by the new world order emerging around us.

The President's vision of that order was novel, and it is curious that the talk in which he expressed it should have received so little detailed analysis, for it was a serious intellectual effort. It was, moreover, the best single indication of the direction his ideas have taken in response both to his own preconceptions and the teachings of Henry Kissinger, and thus it also provided a clue to what lay behind the China initiative only a few days earlier, and his save-the-dollar moves of mid-August.

EDMUND STILLMAN, director of the European Division of the Hudson Institute, based in Paris, is the author (with William Pfaff) of *The New Politics, The Politics of Hysteria,* and *Power and Impotence: The Failure of America's Foreign Policy*. His piece "Telling 'Truth' to Power" appeared in our April issue.

The actual details of the President's vision will concern us later. What is important to consider first is the tone of the speech. And here we meet one of the reasons why its radical contents have gone largely unnoticed. For the tone is the old tone habitually adopted by Mr. Nixon: it is the tone of moral earnestness—boring, self-gratulatory, small-town American earnestness.

Thus there is his account of American involvement in world politics over the course of the 20th century: "We have been in four wars in this century, and four times young Americans have gone abroad. We have done so without any idea of conquest or domination. We have lost hundreds of thousands of lives and we have not gotten a thing out of it. . . ." Not the slightest acknowledgment made here or the slightest awareness registered that World War I transformed America from a debtor nation to a creditor, or that the aftermath of World War II saw American business acquire a huge interest in European production at artificial bargain rates (using bloated dollars) and a favored position for the national currency that would have been tolerated so long for no other country.

There is his account of the American role in the Cold War: "Here is a nation that did not seek the preeminent world position. It came to us because of what happened in World War II." Now even if we are prepared to dismiss the Soviet version of history entirely, and even if we were to discount the somewhat more careful arguments of the philo-Soviet revisionist historians, there would be still General de Gaulle's tougher view of American hegemonism in the postwar world to take into consideration. Yet again Mr. Nixon registers not the slightest awareness of any such view—and de Gaulle was a man for whom he has frequently expressed the greatest admiration.

There is, finally, the whole business of the strained comparisons of modern America to Greece and Rome. A sensibility formed by the films of Cecil B. De Mille might, surveying the contemporary scene of protest, live-ins, drugs, and hard-core pornography, imagine itself in Babylon or in the Rome of the decadence. But need one, perhaps a bit gracelessly, remind the President that in the case of Greece, at least, the problem was not at all that the people drew back from

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

civic responsibility? On the contrary, in the full flush of their strength, victims of *hubris*, the Athenians embarked on a course of imperialism that eventually plunged all of Greece into a suicidal civil war. Strained by that war, needing all their resources of men, money, and intellect for the problems they had brought on themselves closer to home, the Athenians nevertheless went off to invade Sicily—bogging themselves down in a hopeless campaign whose outcome, even if successful, could not really have altered the outcome of their deadly struggle with Sparta. The Spartans remained the same narrow-minded, duty-minded prigs to the end, and they were defeated not by decadence from within but by superior military might from without—by Thebes, Macedon, and finally Rome. As for the Rome of the Caesars—of the homosexuals Julius and Tiberius; of the slobbering half-wit Claudius; of the incestuous Caligula; of the matricidal egomaniac Nero—it was in actual fact an *expanding* Rome, not a contracting or withdrawing Rome, and when it fell, it fell in no small measure because its imperial commitments had extended far beyond its military and administrative strength.

Having said all this, however, let us admit that when the President worries he still has some sort of point. No one who has any feeling for what the country was, or seemed to be, in the not-so-distant past, can look at the United States today without a pang of anxiety. But the real question is not whether American society will have the strength to go on shouldering its putative international responsibilities. The real question is why the country is under strain and what is to be done about it.

Here the President seems to be talking dangerous nonsense when he speaks of losing "the will to live, to improve." The society around him is asking just what its true responsibilities are—whether they really do include a willingness to continue shouldering some of the burdens of the past, and whether such a willingness, far from being a test of the country's greatness, might be a mark of its foolishness and its thrall to illusion: might indeed have been so even in the past. If this is the mood of the country, it is no good talking about Greece and Rome. There are serious issues to discuss.

It is striking that a year which has seen Americans ride a dune-buggy on the moon in a dazzling display of technological expertise; which has seen Mr. Nixon hold out the heady prospect of a rapprochement with China or at the very least the revival of something like diplomacy in the Far East; and which has seen the Soviets come a humiliating cropper in the course of their Middle East machinations—that a year which has seen all that has nevertheless done so little to relieve the general air of despondency. The country remains depressed.

Partly it is the lagging economy—an economy whose long-term prospects in the world are not bright, dollar-salvage and clarion calls to economic competitiveness notwithstanding. But I doubt that it is only the economic situation that explains the troubled mood of the country. There seems to be something more. We get some indication of what this is from a recent survey by an opinion-testing institute in Princeton, which showed that a substantial majority of the American people, *except* for the blacks, but otherwise regardless of age, sex, religion, education or geographical distribution, were reluctantly of the belief that the country, in the last ten years, had simply "lost ground."

It is certainly some sort of vindication of democratic theory that the common man in America can admit the unpleasant. This means there is reason to hope that America is not doomed, like some latter-day imperial Spain, to go on repeating sterile and outworn formulas and policies in a futile effort to fend off contact with reality. In this respect the ordinary person has been in advance of a good many among his intellectual leaders, few of whom have been notable for their realism of mind—neither the Establishmentarians nor the general run of critics of official policy. In opposing the war, to be sure, the ordinary American has lagged behind the universities. But in his refusal to condemn the nation out of hand, his tendency to shrink from the sort of hyperbole not at all uncommon among the anti-war intellectuals—charges of a deliberate American policy of genocide, for example, or cries that American imperialism is worse than any the world has known—the man on the street has often seemed more sensible than the country's elites.

Still, even in a democracy, the man on the street does not initiate policy. He can only respond to propositions and choices put by others. He can only follow or not where others seek to lead. And here his morosity seems well justified. It is the duty of the elites to provide the framework of debate, the propositions and the choices among which the many can choose. In this duty, the elites of America have of late been failing very badly. Those who have attacked the war in Vietnam have been unable to set their opposition to the war into a coherent view of the country and its role. They have been right in this opposition but they have never been able to agree on a convincing explanation of why the war is wrong, and what the whole experience means. They have seemed fickle in their causes—moving from Vietnam to pollution to feminism to educational policy and back again, often at bewildering speed, and often in a style repugnant to a citizenry surfeited with the very idea of violent protest and confrontation. Not content with carrying forward the difficult task of educating the electorate to the notion that we cannot always win

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and that Vietnam is, in any case, from this nation's point of view, a tragic, and criminal, waste, they have asked the ordinary American to see his country as an evil force aimed at subjugating and even exterminating the non-white peoples of the world. And as if this were not enough, they have demonstrated a perverse skill in joining the issue of the war to other issues—especially involving sex and pornography—which have been calculated to assault the values of the ordinary American and to offend his most vulnerable sensibilities.

But if the common man has not been well served by the opposition intellectuals, he has if anything been even worse served by the Establishment. For the dominant characteristic of the American Establishment today is exhaustion—exhaustion of ideas, exhaustion of will, and most damaging of all, exhaustion of the power to generate popular faith in its ideas. Twenty-five years of American world guardianship and crypto-empire have left the inadequacies of Establishment thought naked to view, including the view of the common man who knows as well as anyone that very little has worked out as previsioned by the Establishment —not even those few things which have worked out well.

In Asia, our China initiative aside (for it is still too early to tell what its effects will be), we are very nearly alone—except for the uncertain allegiance of petty Asian stipendiaries whose support we have had, for the most part all too obviously, to buy. And what these stipendiaries will do now as the new China policy, if it is indeed a policy and not merely a ploy, continues to unfold and their more sordid interests are threatened, no one really knows. In Europe, where the great postwar hopes of the American leadership have in fact been realized, we cannot decide what to do next. In Latin America, after a third of a century of repeated starts in what is always billed as creative hemisphere diplomacy, America is still mistrusted and the prevailing social landscape is still one of economic and political retardation. As for Afro-Asia, more than twenty years of warning that if we did not succeed in sponsoring development there the Soviets would, have left the American electorate bored and indifferent—subliminally aware that nothing very much seems to change in these regions and that outside powers, whatever their ideological or political hopes, never really win.

The American people have been cried wolf to, over and over again, and the inevitable reaction has set in. Even the calm with which the news of the China initiative was accepted may reflect less the growing maturity of the nation than its simple exhaustion.

But if America were merely suffering from physical or financial exhaustion, the problem, while serious, would not be a deadly one. After all, so far as international relations go, we are in a kind of trough of history: this is not, fashionable opinion to the contrary notwithstanding, a turbulent age, in any sense comparable to the age of Hitler or the postwar age of Stalin. Considered as a tragedy internal to Asia, even Vietnam is relatively small as compared, say, with the 19th-century Taiping Rebellion in China in which 30 or 40 millions died or, for that matter, no worse than the massacres which occurred in Indonesia in 1967 and in Bengla Desh in 1971. Lest I be misunderstood I want to stress the point: the killing in Vietnam is a tragedy, and may very well be, with respect to the American involvement, a crime. But the dreadful truth is that the historical significance of the war lies not in what it has meant and done to Vietnam, but in what it has meant and done to America.

It is worth reflecting too, as a further curiosity of the present depressed situation, that the United States has actually won the Cold War as measured by the objectives defined in 1947-48 when the now canonical American foreign policy was originally laid down. For if our purpose was to reconstruct Western Europe and Japan while preventing their seizure by the Soviets, that aim has been amply achieved. The Soviet Union has grown since the Second World War, developing a formidably hyper-modern military technology along the way. But there was nothing to be done about that by America except to undertake sensible programs of defense, avoid clashes, and seek a reasonable adjustment of interests around the periphery of the USSR once the messianic fervor of the Soviets had begun to wane—as indeed it did begin to do after Stalin's death.

This was what the Cold War was really all about. But it became mythologized into a gigantic clash of systems in which the ridiculous Soviet pretension to serve as a complete alternative to the Western way of life was taken at face value by many Americans, and in which resistance to the Soviets all along the spectrum came to be seen in America as the supreme test of national greatness. Then, after the victory of the Chinese Communists (not the Soviet Union) in China and in response as well to the Korean War, we panicked, so that the measured foreign policy devised in the early postwar years by men like George Kennan and Louis Halle, mere containment, was subtly infused with a spirit of anti-Communist crusade. Yet despite its formidable military and economic power, the Soviet Union was, is, and for the foreseeable future will be inferior to the United States in everything but the ability to trigger mutual nuclear suicide—an ability, incidentally, which in the world of the closing third of the 20th century is less and less the exclusive property of the so-called superpowers.

This somewhat Olympian view, of course, is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

easier to maintain in the present decade, when the defects of the Soviet position and the growing multipolarity of world power are manifest, than it would have been in the hectic 1940's and 1950's. Even so, we ought not to have lost our cool. However alarming a threatened Indian adhesion to Communism might have seemed a decade-and-a-half ago; however alarming to budget-hungry American admirals the presence of an inferior and ill-conceived Soviet fleet on the world's oceans; however alarming the rhetorical alliances concluded between the Soviets and such romantic Afro-Asian revolutionaries as Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, Sukarno in Indonesia, or Karim Kassim in Iraq, indeed whatever paper alliances the Soviets might yet conclude, like their recent agreement with India—such ephemeral successes could never offset the actual deterioration of the Soviet position implicit in the consolidation of economic and political power in Western Europe, the rise of a hostile China on its eastern flank, and its imminent dethronement as the world's second economic power by a newly rising Japan.

The Cold War, then, has been won—*had* been won, tragically enough, by the time the Kennedy administration embarked on its ill-fated Vietnam adventure. The external dangers to the United States, or even its friends, are no longer severe. (The Israelis are of course in danger but are well able to defend themselves if given adequate armaments.) In this situation the old ideas and myths are dying, with very little to take their place. The Establishment has nothing to offer and its liberal critics are apocalyptic or empty or sentimentally absurd.

Yet it is not only true, as is often said, that a nation usually gets the government it deserves; it is also true that a nation gets the intellectuals it deserves. In other words, if America is suffering from an exhaustion of spirit and ideas, it is the inherited American political faith—the very nature of the country in a sense—that is most fundamentally to blame.

I REALIZE that it has been usual to speak of the Americans as a pragmatic people—down-to-earth and severe with ideas, endlessly testing them, piercing through pretension. Very possibly in technology and business this was so; very possibly it was true, on occasion, in domestic politics. But in their view of themselves as actors on the stage of history, and in their view of the external world, Americans as a nation have been surprisingly ideological. Underlying American political actions there has always been a coherent political faith.

What were its main features?

There was, to begin with, the notion of the United States itself as a kind of special creation —a new thing in history destined to bring the world along in its train. This was the strain of American messianism.

There was the congenital dislike of the external world—the Old World—with its "corruption" and "vice" and "class" and "backwardness" and with its irrational, and intolerable, national "hatreds." All these defects were held to be absent from America—so that Woodrow Wilson, that archetypical American figure, could even say while bringing his nation into the titanic struggle of the First World War that the "jealousies and rivalries of the complicated politics of Europe" which had gone into making the war he did not wish, in any sense, to know. (It is interesting, however, that the Americans had the support of the Old World itself in developing these righteous attitudes. *"Amerika, du hast es besser,"* said Goethe, summing up a common European idea. If later, during the years of America's first intervention into world affairs, an exasperated Clemenceau or Lloyd George found themselves repelled by the moral certitudes of Woodrow Wilson at Versailles, their respective peoples displayed no such reserve when the American President appeared before them. For the frenzied millions of post-World War I Europe, America remained the very incarnation of the just and uncorrupted dream. And even the post-World War II *intellectuels méchants* of St. Germain, like Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, so savage in their strictures on American politics and culture, often seemed, in their passionate and anti-rational angers at America, more like disappointed lovers than anything else.)

But there were other elements in the American political faith. There was the belief in progress—in an automatic progress which led the nation, and through it mankind, forward on an ascent which could be only momentarily checked. There was the related belief in the limitless power of reason to reduce human affairs to knowable causes and in the power of technics to turn such knowledge into a practical science in which experts and professionals might be trained. There was the faith in the possibility of a material solution to any problem and a correlative faith in the sovereign power of wealth. But above all there was the faith in the validity of the American experience—of American doctrines and American institutions—as a prototype for all mankind.

The ideology of post-World War II American globalism was essentially an amalgam of all these beliefs—though in a nation self-consciously anti-ideological, the very existence of the ideology was usually denied. It was an ideology simultaneously capable of appearing immensely sophisticated and—as formulated in the popular literature of interventionism—embarrassingly naive. The historical era in which it held sway is in actual chronology only three or four years distant, but so emotionally distant has it grown that only diehards remain explicitly loyal to its major tenets today. In this process of disenchantment what has been instrumental, however, is not reason or ma-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

turity; it is the war in Vietnam. For in this single war the American leadership, with the acquiescence of the American populace, even if that populace was not always candidly informed of the nature of the undertaking, invested every one of the elements subsumed under the ideology of American globalism. And as they have met frustration and defeat, each of these beliefs has been compromised as well.

Thus the notion of the universal validity of the American experience has been blasted by the incomprehensibility of a quasi-colonial war, dirty and unending, fought out amidst obscure factions in a blind and hostile land. The belief in reason and technics has been discredited by the failure of all the experts gathered together in the State Department and the Defense Department and the White House to design a viable strategy or foresee what the next year would bring. The notion of wealth as a sovereign remedy for psychic and political ills has been blighted by the spectacle of the stipendiary South Vietnam reduced to degradation by the American material presence. The belief in the moral separateness and superiority of America has been damaged, if not destroyed, by the news of My Lai and other such hideous episodes.

We need not go on with the list. Most of all, what seems to have been irretrievably lost in Vietnam is the old American sense of omnipotence on which the national optimism had always, in the last analysis, been based.

It is not going to be easy to repair the damage inflicted by the past twenty years, and certainly not with policies based on the same political faith and the same temperamental qualities which got us into so much trouble in the first place. For a nation like the United States, disappointed in its visions of the international order and bitter over all the blood and effort it has expanded, is far more likely to retreat in sullen disappointment from the world than it is to relearn, or indeed to learn for the first time, the true grammar of world affairs.

This is not to deny that the Nixon administration has made an effort. It is to say, however, that the effort is a timid effort and not a vigorous one. And the past lives on. The talk in Washington is of policy departures—and in the China initiative there truly seems to be such a departure. But in Europe, where if anywhere the Nixon Doctrine of transferring the primary responsibility for their own defense to our allies, rather than assuming the burden ourselves, could and should apply, and in Vietnam, where the crying need is to get out, the old immobilism holds and many of the old evasions remain.

Yet there are some changes. It is noteworthy that in the two State of the World Reports issued this year and last, and in the Kansas City talk to the press, Mr. Nixon acknowledges what no postwar President before him has ever been willing to acknowledge—that we live in a plural world and that American power is past its apogee. The Kennedy administration, to be sure, spoke of making the world safe for diversity—and was in practice the most imperial-minded administration we have had in this century, leading us straight into the tragedy of Vietnam and into a pointless collision with the independent ambitions of Europe: a will to independence embodied in, but not limited to, the figure—so perversely misunderstood in America—of Charles de Gaulle. (This same will to independence is embodied today in less attractive form by the German bankers who no longer feel a philanthropic urge to subsidize American imperial visions by subsidizing the dollar—though paradoxically they whimper at the thought of having to defend themselves.)

No, there is a new tone in the White House. "Many of you . . . are old enough to remember what America was twenty-five years ago," Mr. Nixon said in Kansas City. "We were number one in the world militarily, with no one who even challenged us because we had a monopoly of atomic weapons. . . . Now twenty-five years having passed . . . we see five great economic superpowers, the United States, Western Europe, the Soviet Union, China, and, of course, Japan." His conclusion was simply that "the United States, as compared with that position we found ourselves in immediately after World War II, has a challenge such as we did not even dream of."

This is good talk to hear from an American President, even though its effect of tough-minded realism is somewhat vitiated by the moral exhortations, the faint echoes of Chautauqua, that accompany it. There is also the nagging question of whether Mr. Nixon's vision of the world of 1985 as a benign arena in which the five "economic superpowers" joust in a purely economic game (again a good clue to the new economic policy he was to announce a few weeks later) is still not at bottom a little visionary, a little utopian in the old American style, and a little simplistic as well.

The language is certainly realistic—and without being bellicose either:

> Even if we find ways to avoid confrontation . . . and perhaps work out a negotiated settlement for mutual force reductions in Europe and the problem of Berlin and all the others that come to mind, we must recognize that the Soviet Union will continue to be a very powerful, potent, aggressive competitor of the United State of America. And ironically— . . . as we have more and more success on the negotiation front, as for example the Soviet Union, like the United States, may be able if we have a limitation in nuclear arms, if we are able to turn our eyes more towards our economic development and our economic problems—it simply means that the competition changes and be-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

comes much more challenging than it has previously.

On China he had much the same to say:

> . . . the very success of our policy of ending the isolation of mainland China will mean an immense escalation of their economic challenge, not only to us, but to others in the world. . . . 800 million Chinese . . . as a result of that opening will become an economic force in the world of enormous potential.

The burden of all this was that the United States economy would have to be strong in order to meet the challenges. Predictably, economic strength came down to sound spirits in healthy bodies. But the vaporings aside, many questions arise. Can we, for example, believe that a world of jostling economic competition will not be one of political tension as well? Will arms races be, as it were, beaten into trade wars—or will it be the other way around? And, anyway, just how sound will the American economy prove in the long run?

There is also the question of the simple plausibility of Mr. Nixon's vision. Thus, while no one can deny that the Soviet Union is an immensely powerful country, in economic terms as well as military, it is hard to see the Soviets exporting much else beyond relatively crude heavy industrial products like steel, commodities of which the Western world and Japan already have a surfeit. They are not likely to beat the Italians at the refrigerator game or the Japanese at computer technology and services for a long, long time indeed. Where then is all this Soviet competition to come from that Mr. Nixon sees as developing?

The other point is simply that neither by tradition, structure, nor planned design is the Soviet Union a trading country on the international capitalist scene. And what is true for the Soviets is doubly true for China. It is noteworthy that a few weeks after Mr. Nixon's speech, Chou En-Lai, in an interview with the New York *Times*, cast doubt on the whole idea. China, he said, is going to concentrate on its internal market for years and years to come. And it is well for him to say so. For China would have to do superbly well in the next twenty years to match even the current economic impact of so relatively small a country as Italy on world trade.

If, then, Mr. Nixon is looking for economic challenges—and if he does not they will soon come looking for him—he had better search the horizons much closer to home.

STILL Mr. Nixon is not a bad President and his foreign policy is not bad either—if we understand by bad the blind, activist seeking of disasters that has characterized most previous administrations in the postwar period. The real question is whether he is good enough—and fast enough. And here there is sufficient cause for worry. The pace is abysmally slow. Said Mr. Nixon in his second State of the World Report: ". . . the method is crucial. Clearly we could not have continued the inherited policy on Vietnam. Just as clearly, the way in which we set about to resolve this problem has a major impact on our credibility abroad and our cohesion at home." This is the choice that has met the President at every turn—in European policy, in the dollar crisis, in Vietnam. And each time he has opted for caution—caution masked by some showy and ultimately ineffectual action, as in maintaining our outworn commitment to Saigon while lunging into Cambodia.

There is also the matter of the administration's repeated Middle East interventions. Do we really need a Middle East *hubris* to replace the old Southeast-Asian *hubris*? How can an administration which acknowledges the end of total American preeminence, and which (at least verbally) seeks to cut the coat of American foreign policy to the now shrunken cloth of American emotional stamina, toy with a policy of externally imposed settlements and guarantees in the Middle East? The all-too-predictable outcome would be an eventual breach of conditions, to the detriment of Israel, and a consequent American obligation to make good on its security guarantees. Would an exhausted America do it? It is permissible to doubt.

The more one examines the foreign policy of the Nixon administration, the more patchy it seems, and the less it suggests a coherent strategy of interlocking regional policies. In general, Mr. Nixon gives the impression of impulsiveness and improvisation, as in the Cambodian invasion, which dealt yet another blow to a sagging American faith in the country's leaders, and which established an ill-understood commitment thereafter to the fortunes of the anti-Sihanouk government. And the same qualities are evident in the entire idea of Vietnamization, which proceeds on the fantasy that the South Vietnamese alone will be able to do what they were unable to do with the help of a huge American army.

As it all too clearly begins to appear, all the administration has been doing in Vietnam is to prolong the agony, to disappoint yet one more hope of the American electorate, and to ensure that the final bargain with the Vietcong and the North (and it will be struck) will be worse than the bargain we could have struck immediately after Mr. Nixon took office. Mr. Nixon has held on doggedly to a falling stock, and has seen it fall lower with every passing day.

All of which brings us to the China initiative. There are many reasons for an approach to China—not the least of them being that it could, in the foreseeable future, increase pressure on the Soviets to make a satisfactory settlement in Europe. One suspects that the administration has no such coherent strategy in mind and that, good as this

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

move certainly is in itself, it may be nothing more than a gambit. Perhaps Mr. Nixon has at last begun to despair of a better outcome in Vietnam and hopes that in the larger picture of a Chinese-American rapprochement no one will greatly care. Or perhaps he hopes that the Chinese and the Americans together (with the Russians or without?) can arrange and impose a settlement over the protests of the warring factions of Vietnamese. If so, this would prove that the illusions of great-power omnipotence are not dead in Washington yet.

But in the final analysis, for all the air of realism that tricks out the administration's pronunciamentos on foreign affairs, they are based on an overriding illusion: that America can win the same victories in the world as Mr. Nixon's predecessors sought, but at bargain-basement prices. Mr. Nixon, for all his acknowledgments of the dethronement of America from a one-time position of nuclear and economic preeminence, still wishes a political preeminence for America. He said as much in Kansas City and in his dollar speech—though, of course, he claims to seek that preeminence not for the primary good of America but for the good of mankind as a whole.

For essentially the same outcome in Vietnam that Mr. Nixon until very recently wanted, the Johnson administration was willing, by hook or by crook, to invest an American army of over 525,000 men, with all the killing and maiming and social strain at home that such a policy entailed. It was a tragic error; but despite the trickery that the introduction of so large an American force entailed, despite all the lying about body counts and aircraft losses and clandestine special forces, it was logical and an internally consistent policy with a fair chance of success. It happens that the enemy was more formidable than Mr. Johnson and his advisers supposed, but that was the policy's only major *conceptual* flaw. Mr. Nixon's foreign policy is largely one of self-deception and that, in the end, may be worse.

THE role of the Vice President in the present administration is an ambiguous one, and it is probably a mistake to assume too easily that Spiro Agnew actually speaks for the government on any single occasion, or for that matter in more than a general way at all. Yet there has been one angry theme stressed repeatedly by the Vice President which has found its echo in Mr. Nixon as well: that is the theme of neo-isolationism.

According to the administration, the great danger is that the critics of Vietnamization, the critics of the Cambodian invasion, the critics of the Laotian subterfuges, the critics of the indefinitely prolonged American presence in Europe, the critics of the continued stationing of the American Seventh Fleet in the Straits of Taiwan—all these critics, "neo-isolationists" at heart, will swamp the painfully acquired sense of international responsibility which is the great American achievement of World War II and the postwar years.

Just what the administration means by neo-isolationism has never been clearly defined. In fact, the term properly refers to a school of thought and foreign-policy analysis which began, some ten or twelve years ago, to point to and explore the implications of the breakdown of the Soviet-American duopoly and the emergence of a multiplicity of new power centers. It was the view of this school that both the United States and the Soviet Union were mired in illusion, dangerously mired in illusion; that the threat of further Soviet expansion was minimal; that the alleged combat between democracy and Communism for the adherence of the "Third World" (on which the outcome of the Cold War was widely believed to rest) was pretty much an unreal struggle. It followed that the task of American diplomacy was to draw back from this nation's overextended responsibilities, while simultaneously, through pressure and persuasion attempting to facilitate a corresponding Soviet retreat from overextension. For overextension was deeply damaging and, in the long run, dangerous to the Soviets, to us, and to the world as a whole.

This point of view which we neo-isolationists expressed was, I believe, right ten years ago and is still right today, and Mr. Nixon and Mr. Agnew do no service in attacking it. By rejecting its arguments while there was still time for sensible measures of reform, the globalists who have for the past twenty years dominated the foreign-policy Establishment—the State and Defense Department professionals, the docile politicians, the conventional practitioners of "political science" in the universities, the think-tanks, and the foundations—merely insured the resurgence of what is more accurately described as paleo-isolationism than as neo-isolationism—a complete revulsion against American involvement in the world amid national conditions of anger, disappointment, and financial strain.

For the fundamental tradition of America—on the Left as well as on the Right—*is* isolationist. The promiscuous interventionism that has characterized American foreign policy for the past twenty years was never, at bottom, more than a psychological inversion of isolationism: since the world would not let America alone, America would set out to make the world over in its own image.

Now that this doomed undertaking has failed, the signs of excessive reaction are everywhere about us. Thus, in response to the failure of American arms in Vietnam, the very notion of force as an instrument of national policy is now scoffed at in many circles of opinion. Yet contrary to the current dogma that even the super-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

powers no longer dare to use force, the truth is that examples of the successful use of force are still all too abundant, as Biafra, Czechoslovakia, and Bengla Desh all sordidly testify. Force remains an option and will always remain an option, the issue being when and how and how much a nation can prudently use.

Thus too, having invested lives, treasure, and emotion in Vietnam to no good purpose and finding it difficult—indeed under the present administration agonizingly difficult—to ensure a definite terminal date for the involvement of American troops in that tragedy, our politicians succumb to a new impulse: to withdraw our troops from Europe instead. Now I am the last to deny that alternatives to NATO need examination and implementation. But surely to leave without a meaningful settlement is to reverse the proper order of things. Surely too in Vietnam it would have been better to negotiate seriously toward a settlement—because we are, after all, obligated to help clean up the bloody mess we made—long, long ago.

Running parallel to the impulse to pull up stakes and go home is a tendency to strike out at the laggardly Establishment in substitute spheres. As the demand to leave Europe *now* is one consequence of Vietnam, so is the new vogue for hitting the "military-industrial complex" (as if *it* had ever been anything but reluctant about getting into Vietnam) in surrogate ways—voting down SST's, scoffing at the moon program, etc. There is, moreover, the contempt in which a good many simple and honorable men who have themselves been badly duped by their leaders (yes, I mean the United States officer corps) are held by increasing numbers of the population at large. In typical American fashion we do nothing by halves, so that the very notion of the armed services is now implicitly called into question—regarded not as an instrumentality that ought to be used with infinite caution, but as an intrinsically evil thing.

This is the new spirit of isolationism—the notion that America, in Charles Péguy's phrase, can best have clean hands by having no hands at all.

HAVING, then, for more than twenty years exaggerated the confrontation with Communism—having generalized a power-political combat with the Soviet Union, finite in time and space, into a universal combat for the totality of world civilization—America itself has now fallen into internal jeopardy. The whole society having foolishly been mobilized—materially, intellectually, spiritually—the failure of this vast national effort, as epitomized in Vietnam, now triggers a totalist and exaggerated and often misdirected reappraisal in which the very legitimacy of the society and its subordinate institutions comes into serious question.

The damage has gone beyond the possibility of easy repair: no mere retrenchment now will do the trick, and certainly no feckless foreign adventures. It is hard to believe that Mr. Nixon can make the nation look truly great again, and although I do not envisage a lapse into decadence on the model of ancient Rome, I find myself remembering Winston Churchill's words: "Nations as well as individuals come to ruin through the over-exercise of those very qualities and faculties on which their dominion has been founded." Perhaps it is an intuitive grasp of this truth which accounts on the deepest level for the malaise of the American elites and the morosity of the American people.

Reprints of this article are available at fifty cents each. Orders of 25 or more earn a twenty per cent discount.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

From an Israeli Diary

Walter Laqueur

WHEN I returned to London the other day, it was with a sense of anti-climax, for throughout a long stay in Israel, I had felt more than usually elated. This was not easy to explain to some of my Israeli friends, who find the country in its present state far from exhilarating. Once the shooting ceased, once the outside pressure lessened a little, all the internal problems reappeared with a vengeance: widespread official and wildcat strikes, violent demonstrations by "Black Panthers," young couples in search of apartments, an economic situation which had not basically improved, a religious Establishment as obscurantist and intransigent as ever toward all outsiders (with the exception of some recently arrived underworld figures from the United States). Hadn't I sensed the new vulgarity in Israeli life, reflected in the commercials on the radio, the advertisements in the press ("Now that you have arrived, you need a new car commensurate with your social status"), the idiocy of the current pop-culture heroes, the mushrooming of those American-style restaurants called *steakiot*?

Before going to Israel I had been reading Balzac; more than once in Tel Aviv I was reminded of César Birotteau, the *nouveau-riche* perfume producer whose doom is foreshadowed by the ruinously expensive soirée he gives to impress his friends. Who in Israel can afford the sumptuous weddings and *Bar-Mitzvot* with many hundreds of guests which have recently come into fashion? (Meanwhile the rabbis have come out against this practice.) Who earns enough to buy luxury apartments ("a new concept in civilized living"), to frequent the ludicrously expensive restaurants? Conspicuous consumption on the one hand and intense social conflict on the other: there was no day while I was in Israel without two or three major strikes.

And yet with all this there was a pervasive feeling of optimism notably absent in other parts of the world, a liveliness and spirit of enterprise which make up a mood very different from the mood one now encounters almost everywhere else. According to official statistics Israelis sleep and eat longer and work fewer hours than most Europeans and Americans. Yet if these surprising figures are correct, which I doubt, it must be that Israelis manage to get a great deal done in their working hours—or so it would seem from the new buildings, the new industries, the new suburbs and settlements.

Perhaps after long exposure to London and New York I overrate the advantages of the small-town atmosphere in Tel Aviv or Jerusalem, the fact that Israel as a whole is still a "polis," a face-to-face community in which, figuratively speaking, everyone knows everyone else. One could think of many reasons for an intellectual to feel unhappy with the present state of Israeli culture: the provincialism; the lack of discrimination with regard to foreign importations; the pompous self-righteous types on one side and the "trendy" followers of international fashions on the other. But it would require a considerable effort to feel alienated. The danger is of too much involvement, not too little. I have spent a third of my life on and off in this country. Some of those years were not the happiest I have known. But I do have roots here; everywhere I go I see familiar faces, and whenever I enter that air-conditioned hall at the airport in Lod there is, for better or worse, the feeling of coming home again.

****

MY SEMINAR at the university on "Communism Between the Two World Wars" has a total attendance of eight, average age fifty-one. But so many young students wanted to be in the parallel seminar I am giving on fascism that I could not accommodate all of them. Who would have thought that Communism would become a boring subject and that fascism would again attract so much intellectual curiosity? For these young Israelis want to know how anyone could ever be a fascist. Anti-Semitism, too, remains quite inexplicable despite Pinsker, Herzl, and Nordau, who are apparently no longer read. We talk about the spread of anti-Semitism in Germany during the 20's, and I hear myself repeating the standard explanations: the concentration of Jews in cer-

WALTER LAQUEUR, a regular contributor, is the director of the Institute of Contemporary History in London and a professor of history at the University of Tel Aviv. His latest book is *Out of the Ruins of Europe* (The Library Press).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tain areas, the fear of Jewish competition, the menace of the Jewish department stores, the disproportionate number of Jewish lawyers and physicians. I have been vaguely dissatisfied for a long time with this view of the matter. Someone asks whether it can be proved that there was more anti-Semitism among German lawyers and physicians than among, say, farmers or insurance agents. Later, in the library, I try to check and find my suspicions confirmed. There was no obvious correlation in Germany or Austria between Jewish occupational concentrations and the incidence of sympathy for Nazism.

I was lucky to get these books, for on the whole library facilities are deplorable in the new universities, which makes teaching, let alone research, very difficult indeed. But there is yet another problem: of the younger students few have a good knowledge of English or French or German. My generation picked up a working knowledge of several languages—it was one of the side effects of being uprooted. The young Israeli today has to make a major effort to familiarize himself with languages other than Hebrew. Even the professional translators can no longer be trusted. The previous weekend a Hebrew daily had featured an article of mine originally written in English; I did not bother to check the translation. The article began with the following words: "Some anti-Semites clearly prefer to call a spade not a spade but an agricultural implement." Apparently unfamiliar with this colloquialism, the translator rendered it literally. A few people told me that they had read the article with interest, but wondered why I had to bring agriculture into a discussion of anti-Semitism.

Leaving the library I meet a colleague who tells me that there is much indignation at the Hebrew University because several prominent Jerusalem professors recently left to join the faculty at Tel Aviv. Relations between these two institutions of learning are rather strained. Jerusalem, which had a monopoly for so long, is finding it difficult to adjust to its new role as one of several universities; it is still very good in some fields but has been overtaken in others. It is also still the largest university with 14,000 students, but only just, for Tel Aviv now has 12,000 (and a staff of 1,400). Haifa has 5,000 (and a staff of 400), Bar-Ilan (also in Tel Aviv) almost that many, and even Beersheba University, the newest of the lot, already has some 2,000 students.

I am frequently asked what I make of the students here and how they compare with their contemporaries abroad. It is not easy to give an answer. Those aged thirty or older are on the whole excellent and there are quite a few of them: kibbutzniks, army officers, mothers whose children have left home; they are, to use the fashionable term, highly motivated. It is more difficult to generalize about the younger ones. There are not so many high-fliers as in the better American and English universities, but the average level is probably the same. They lack sophistication, and few write easily or really well. The idea of writing a short essay or two each week, as they do in Oxford and Cambridge, would be rejected as utterly impossible. But it seems to me that Israeli students achieve more than their English or American counterparts during their years at the university, perhaps because they are a little older, generally with three years of army service already behind them. I sometimes wonder whether Mao and Khrushchev were altogether wrong when they sent their students to work in factories and on farms. Such an experience might not do a brilliant physics student any good, but for those studying history and politics, not to mention sociology and psychology, some exposure to life as it is really lived by most people from day to day, would do no harm at all.

****

For anyone who lived here in the early 50's the economic improvement seems far more impressive than it is likely to look to the new immigrant or the tourist who comes for the first time. I am still surprised by the delicatessen shops with imported goods, the boutiques, the many new cars on the roads. I wonder how the survivors of the Second and Third *Aliyot* feel about it all. Their sense of *savoir-vivre* was certainly underdeveloped, in private life they were modest: no dandies and gourmets among them. They could not understand how people could waste time and money on "frivolities" instead of concentrating on the "really important things" in life. They were egalitarians and their egalitarianism was strongly rooted in the Russian-Jewish socialist tradition. At the first Histadrut conventions speakers regularly insisted that white-collar workers should on no account earn more than manual workers and argued that it would be unseemly for trade-union and party leaders to enjoy a higher standard of living than the workers they represented.

But the Israel of today is no longer the *Eretz Yisrael ha'ovedet* ("the laboring Land of Israel") of 1923, when the Histadrut had a few thousand members in a Jewish population of about 100,000. If general wealth and consumption have increased, so has economic and social differentiation. The poorest 20 per cent of the population received 7 per cent of the national income in 1954; their share fell to 4 per cent in 1969. The top 20 per cent earned 38 per cent of the national income in 1954 and their share rose to 42 per cent in 1969. In absolute terms the discrepancy is even more striking: housing, for instance, is more expensive than in America or Europe. In the United States and most Western European countries, most people can afford a car. But the cheapest car in Israel costs more than $4,000—

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and the average monthly wage is still less than $200.*

Economic indices are a source of bewilderment. Industrial production has gone up by more than 60 per cent since 1967; and the Israeli G.N.P., which amounted to some 40 per cent of Egypt's when Nasser came to power, will probably catch up with Egypt's (population 35 million) by 1972. But defense spending has gone up fourfold since the Six-Day War and 80 per cent of state revenues goes to defense. I have mentioned the present strike wave. The Histadrut has become much more militant. Yitzhak Ben Aharon, its secretary, has been bitterly criticized by Pinhas Sapir, the Finance Minister; both are members of the Labor party. This new militancy is of course not in the least surprising: the more affluent the country, the more viable its economy, the greater the wage claims. As recently as 1966, at a time of serious economic recession, there was substantial unemployment, but there is full employment now. The other day I had to look up some 1954 newspapers; I found one lonely ad in the "positions vacant" section of the (English-language) *Jerusalem Post,* and not many more in the Hebrew press. Now many hundreds of such advertisements can be found in the weekend editions.

The squatters (young couples, Oriental Jews, ex-soldiers) who occupied some new buildings scheduled for new immigrants have shocked public opinion, but their action should not have come as a surprise either. In the present state of affairs rents are well beyond the reach of anyone living on an average salary, while to buy even the cheapest house or apartment a deposit is needed which few can afford. According to official statistics the average price of an apartment in one of the main towns is around $7,000. That may be, but the ones advertised in the papers cost at least two or three times as much. It would take the average wage-earner decades to pay out a new apartment, provided of course he had the money for a deposit in the first place and could meet his mortgage and loan payments on an income of, say, $180 a month.

In the ghettos of East Europe families of five, six, or more used to live in a room or two, and not so long ago the average apartment in Israel consisted of two or three small rooms. But no one looks back. The other day, in a somewhat hysterical manifesto datelined Waltham, Mass., a student, apparently of Oriental origin, denounced *inter alia* the Ashkenazim for keeping the new arrivals from North Africa in "rotten wooden huts." How quickly people forget. When we first came to the kibbutzim, these wooden huts seemed the height of luxury. We lived in tents for a year or two until our turn came to move into one of them.

Since then expectations have risen, tents have disappeared, and the idealistic pioneering spirit seems to have vanished. The spokesmen of the Jerusalem "Black Panthers" have announced that they have no intention of working in agriculture or on building sites. Some old-timers are outraged, while the social scientists point out that many of the building workers of 1936 and 1946 have meanwhile become entrepreneurs. But during the last fifteen years there has been no mass immigration, and as a result social mobility has sharply decreased. The thousands who arrive from the Soviet Union and the United States are mostly professional people. Those who are now manual laborers fear that they may never rise above their present status and they resent it.

****

I COME home with the weekend editions of the *Jerusalem Post, Ha'aretz, Davar, Al Hamishmar, Lamerhav, Ma'ariv,* and *Yediot Aharonot.* Tel Aviv has some nineteen daily papers, which is more than New York and London combined, though fewer than Beirut. How much there is to read. Each paper contains dozens of articles, and the weekend illustrated sections compare not unfavorably with the *Observer,* the New York *Times Sunday Magazine* and the (London) *Sunday Times.* Whatever the current problem—the Rogers Plan, the grievances of Oriental Jews, or the nurses' strike—local editors seem to believe in saturation coverage. On foreign affairs (which means the Arab countries and Soviet activities in the Middle East) there are very frequent contributions by generals and colonels. Herzl, in his *Diaries,* predicted that in the coming Jewish State the officers would be kept in their barracks and the rabbis in their synagogues. In Israel the generals are very prominent in public life, especially the media, and the rabbis certainly do not keep to their synagogues.

On the whole the articles on foreign policy are thoughtful; considering the depressed state of the world's press, they are by comparison on a fairly high level. But there is also a certain amount of outright nonsense—such as the long, involved pieces arguing that Israel should seek a rapprochement with the Soviet Union, on the ground that this would be the best way to keep the occupied territories for good. Too much ingenuity goes into the analysis and interpretation of current events and this, needless to say, distorts the whole perspective. Israelis find it difficult to understand that neither Nixon nor Rogers, neither Pompidou nor the Russians have the time—all other considerations apart—to invest as much thought in the problem of Sharm-el-

* A footnote on the standard of driving: it is abysmal, and official attempts to raise it have been quite ineffective. More cook books are published in England than in any other country, but England does not have the world's most exquisite cuisine. Israel is the only country with a daily broadcast (at 7:55 A.M.) advising, admonishing, pleading with motorists to drive carefully—without any apparent effect.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sheikh as they themselves have. There is a tremendous amount of speculation; this may be the only press in the world which gives more coverage to events that *may* happen than to those that have actually taken place. Since hard facts are frequently not available a good deal of space is devoted to rumors: according to an obscure French weekly, some unnamed Soviet journalist mentioned to an equally anonymous American official that war in the Middle East might break out at some unspecified date.

Over the radio this kind of thing goes on day by day almost without interruption, and although Jews have always tended to be an easily excitable people, the public apparently takes this massive exposure to mostly pessimistic news and comment in stride.

In some respects the situation is unique: where else would an ambassador (Yitzhak Rabin, for instance) appear as a political commentator on the radio? And where else would the press periodically give marks to the country's envoys abroad? There are few if any secrets in Israel: the press informs everyone that X no longer enjoys Golda's confidence, that the Foreign Minister had a bitter quarrel with Y, that Z is really Dayan's man and reports directly to him. The cabinet meets every Sunday; the next day, or at the very latest a few days later, Margalit in *Ha'aretz*, Zimuki in *Yediot*, Yoseph Harif in *Ma'ariv* publish full, occasionally verbatim, accounts of the closed proceedings. Golda Meir has tried to stop this, but without the slightest success. How foreign policy can be conducted effectively in such circumstances is beyond my comprehension. So far as the government is concerned, perhaps the only consolation is that the papers report not only everything that did happen but also much that did not, which is a source of confusion to friend and foe alike.

As for the papers themselves, *Lamerhav* has now ceased publication, or, to be more precise, has merged with *Davar*. This follows a general pattern all over the world: party newspapers (*Lamerhav* was the daily of Ahdut Avoda) are less successful than those which have no direct, obvious political affiliation. The socialist parties in Europe, with all their intellectual and financial resources, never succeeded in producing a decent daily newspaper. Nor does it seem to matter: Gahal, the Israeli right-wing party, does not do badly at the polls, though both its dailies have shut down their presses.

****

I HAVE known Eliahu for almost thirty years. Summer and winter he is to be found at the corner of Jaffa and Havatzelet Streets, squatting with his friends, the Kurdish porters, in front of a bookshop and waiting for customers looking for light and heavy removals. He helped me to move out of the German Colony in late December 1947 when sniping and street fighting were already in full swing. Whenever I meet him, which happens once or twice a year, we have a cup of coffee or tea and talk about the good old days, about Jerusalem and business and sometimes a little politics.

This time, inevitably, the "Black Panthers" came up for discussion. Eliahu took a dim view —they were not good Jews, he said, and they did not want to work either. An army officer of Turkish origin who was just preparing his dissertation on experimental medicine and who joined our conversation, differed sharply: the problem was one of wilful Ashkenazi neglect. True, Oriental Jews had far too many children; the problem of overcrowding would not be solved, they would not get an equal chance, if they continued to beget eight and nine children. But who had encouraged them to have that many? Had it not been official government policy to boost the birth rate? He was, of course, quite right.

I had yet another conversation on the same subject with a Jerusalem Sephardi, a member of one of the old families, of which there are quite a few, such as the Elmelichs, the Manis, the Abulafias, the Recanatis, and the Bejaranos. He told me how the Sephardim had been systematically oppressed by the Ashkenazim, but his sweeping statements struck me as wildly exaggerated. I have seen too many industrialists, surgeons, merchant bankers, and other pillars of society hailing from Salonika and Sofia, from Baghdad and Cairo.

The Sephardi ideologists assert that they are deliberately excluded from positions of influence in politics and society. It is true that there are relatively few cabinet ministers of Oriental origin, and though the new secretary of the Histadrut is one, Sephardim are indeed under-represented in the upper reaches of the government, as they are in many areas of Israeli life. And North African Jews on the average earn only about 55 per cent of what European Jews do.

Some observers argue that resentment among the Oriental Jews may cause a radical realignment in Israeli domestic politics and ultimately bring about the downfall of the Mapai party, which has dominated the local political scene for forty years. This seems somewhat farfetched to me, for Gahal and the religious bloc—with which Oriental Jewry would have to ally itself to form a new majority—are even more "Ashkenazi" in character than the Labor party; they have hardly any Jews of Asian or African origin among their leaders. The situation is, however, gradually changing; at the municipal level Israeli parties have shown themselves fully willing to absorb Oriental Jews. About 40 per cent of the municipal councillors are of Afro-Asian origin; in the big cities their share is somewhat smaller (22 per cent in Tel Aviv, 32 per cent in Jerusalem),

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but in the new towns they constitute a majority.

It will be far more difficult to tackle the socio-economic roots of the problem. Birth control is bound to come, but there will be opposition on religious grounds, and resistance from other directions will have to be faced. Cheap housing or, to be precise, apartments at reasonable rents would not only remedy overcrowding; it would make people more mobile, enable them to look for better jobs. But such housing can only be provided through state intervention on a massive scale. The present free-for-all, laissez-faire building system is clearly indefensible.

On the whole the Israeli record of absorption is not at all bad. The Jewish population of Palestine was about 600,000 when the state of Israel came into being. Within twenty years more than twice that number of destitute immigrants was absorbed. Twenty years ago three-quarters of the population of Israel was considered to be living in poverty; now the figure has fallen to about 20 per cent. Yet as Lea Ben Dor points out in a recent issue of the *Jerusalem Post*, the government was mistaken in thinking that the large and disorganized families from the Arab countries which arrived after 1948 would be able to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. The government was not, of course, entirely inactive; under the late Zalman Aranne, then Minister of Education, the decision was made to give underprivileged children special assistance, but these steps did not go far enough. It now appears that "operation headstart" has to begin much earlier and proceed on a larger scale: it has to include tutoring from the very beginning, waiving of all school fees, bigger grants. It is an uphill struggle, and it would be foolish to assume that the problem can be solved within a generation or two. But it is not an impossible challenge, and it can be met once the recognition becomes general that it deserves the highest priority.

THE other evening we spent some hours with a group of newcomers from the Soviet Union. The impressions I got were conflicting. Some said they had not really encountered any anti-Semitism in the USSR. But it appeared that "anti-Semitism" for them meant pogroms—and pogroms, of course, had not taken place. They left, they said, because a general upsurge of nationalism, and not only among the Russians, has made the situation of self-respecting men and women who are neither Russians nor Uzbeks nor Armenians by birth very complicated indeed. Many of them now react violently against any form of socialism—they would not dream of joining a kibbutz, and even Mapai is a little suspect. Others, especially among the young who went to school in Russia and never had time to experience the discrepancy between doctrine and realities, are great Soviet patriots and resent any criticism of their native country. Many do not want to work in private enterprises; they are afraid of exploitation and they think (quite mistakenly, as it happens) that working in the private sector is harder than working for the state. It will take quite a few years before most of them adjust to life in a democratic society.

They find their new surroundings quite puzzling. Why is there such a multitude of shops offering so many different commodities? Why does the state not play a more active role in certain areas of society? Why is so much left to private initiative? Why is Israeli life so informal? Why is there so little distance between rulers and ruled? Why do cabinet ministers mingle with the crowds in the supermarkets, coffee houses, and cinemas?

More intense Zionist feeling exists among the new Soviet immigrants than can be found anywhere else these days. But life in Russia taught them to demand, to claim, to insist—especially in government offices. There is the story of one recent arrival who insisted on getting five apartments: one for himself, another for his divorced wife, the third for his children, the fourth for his old parents, the fifth for his mistress. He did not get all he wanted. Most of the new arrivals are reluctant to go to places such as Arad or Kiryat Shmoneh, and a few may leave Israel. Some of my friends are shocked; they must have forgotten that of the Second Aliyah, the pioneers of 1904-1914, almost two-thirds left, returning to Russia or moving on to the United States. Of the Third Aliyah, after the First World War, only about one-half stayed. Israel is still a difficult country for any newcomer who is not so young and strong and adaptable, who does not have the right profession, who knows neither the language nor the ropes. Many Israelis refuse to see this.

****

RABBI Abraham Atiya was attacked last night, while walking in Yehezkel Street in Jerusalem, by five youngsters who tried to cut off his beard, apparently with partial success. Reporting the story, *Yediot Aharonot* noted that such outrages occurred in Poland between the two world wars and in Nazi Germany; who would have thought that this could happen in Jerusalem? But there are strong feelings in Israel over the interference of the Orthodox parties, their opposition to civil marriage and their power to impose restrictions of all kinds.

The other day I came across a letter from Weizmann to Herzl dated May 6, 1903: ". . . this group [the Mizrahi] will one day use its growing power in a most unexpected and stubborn manner. . . . [Western] Jews are alienated because they recognize within the [Zionist] movement the hollow Jewish ceremonial and formalism from which they fled: Eastern Europe, on the other hand, sees the cultivation of Mizrahi Zionism as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Zionism. This will lead straight to catastrophe. If there is anything in Judaism that has become intolerable and incomprehensible to the best of Jewish youth, it is the pressure to equate its essence with the religious formalism of the Orthodox. Mizrahi represents the element that in the natural course of events is dying by degrees. Their fanatically religious viewpoint and way of life has no bridge leading to contemporary youth."

Jabotinsky was not less emphatic. In an article in *Rassviet* dated September 28, 1926, he bitterly attacked the religious Establishment for its obscurantism, its hatred of free learning, its attitude toward women, its interference with daily life.

The Orthodox bloc still elicits such feelings. The Sephardi rabbis seem to be more flexible than the Ashkenazim, and good things are said about Rabbi Goren, who has just become Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv. But Goren will always have to look over his shoulder to see whether his more liberal policy is not too much out of line with the stand taken by his extremist colleagues. One suspects that the Orthodox fundamentalists in Israel will never accept reform, that a *Kulturkampf* is in the long run inevitable, and that in the end growing public pressure will force a disestablishment of the Orthodox.

****

For many years Ben-Gurion opposed television, with the result that the Israeli Arabs—and quite a few Jews too—got all their spiritual fare from Cairo and Amman, Beirut, and Damascus, and nothing from Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. It took a long time to get TV launched, and even now, several years later, Hebrew TV is on the air for only a little over two hours every evening. Most of the young people I know, however, seem to work for it. The television headquarters are located in Romema, on the outskirts of Jerusalem. The general impression is one of more or less successful improvisation rather than clockwork efficiency and precision. So far no one has been able to hold the job of director for any length of time. The chain of command is cumbersome and confused; the director, when there is one, has to report in great detail to the weekly meeting of the TV Council, which consists of representatives of the major parties who give him both detailed advice and explicit instructions. There are many vested interests and they frequently conflict. Everyone complains that he does not get enough time on the air. Moreover, the director is not entitled to hire and fire as he sees fit; the whole set-up seems quite unmanageable. Since the basic structure of the Broadcasting Authority is unlikely to change, and since the TV Council will certainly not give up any of its prerogatives, Israeli television will probably jog along from crisis to crisis.

One night I appeared with three other people on a round-table program: Is time working for Israel? We had agreed beforehand that each of us would make a short statement, and I was to be the last. But my predecessors all used more than the time they had been allocated, and when my turn came the program was virtually over.

Had I been able to speak, I would have said approximately the following:

It should be Israel's intention to reach an accommodation of some sort with Egypt even though recent changes in Cairo have complicated the situation. Everyone who has been to Egypt of late confirms that there is little enthusiasm for war; some even talk of peace—though not, of course, peace at any price. Suspicion of the Russians is growing. Unless Israel encourages these stirrings they will never become a factor of decisive political importance. Concessions involve risks, but the dangers of *immobilisme* are even greater. There may have been a chance for an Israeli initiative after the Six-Day War. There was another chance after Nasser's death, in January 1971, to be precise. The Israeli government remained inactive; it was argued that Sadat would not be able to deliver the goods. There may be another opportunity in the next few months for a partial solution and it should not be missed.

Whatever the policy toward Egypt, an Israeli initiative should be taken toward the Palestinian Arabs, not because they are at present a major military or political danger, but precisely because their fortunes are now at a low ebb; no one would assume that Israel was under any pressure. It should be acknowledged that as a result of Jewish immigration to Palestine and the emergence of a Jewish state, the Palestinian Arabs suffered an injustice. The injustice was historically inevitable—for the Jews of Europe faced extinction—but the dislocation of the Arabs was still an injustice for which reparation must be made, perhaps through the creation of an autonomous Palestinian state.

It is—I would have gone on to say—a matter of regret that so few Israelis seem to realize how greatly a move of this kind would improve Israel's standing. Of course one has to think in terms of secure borders, but for a great variety of reasons territory alone cannot provide absolute security. China can afford to ignore world opinion—a small country like Israel cannot. For ultimately this could lead to isolation and affect even the supply of money and Phantoms.

If time is not working for Israel, neither is it working for the Arabs. But the perpetuation of the conflict certainly does work in favor of the Russians. Moscow is bound to suffer setbacks such as the recent disaster in Sudan, but this, needless to say, is not the end of the story. The gradual strengthening of Soviet influence in the neighboring countries is infinitely more dangerous from the Israeli point of view than any number of speeches

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by Arafat or even Sadat. Not that the Egyptians want this to happen: they did not regain their independence to become a Russian military base. Yet the longer the Russians stay, the more difficult will their hold on Egypt become to break. One day the Egyptian leaders are bound to realize that Russia constitutes a bigger danger to Egyptian independence than Israel, but by that time the point of no return may have been reached. Some Israelis might say that this would serve the Egyptians right, but such *Schadenfreude* would be misplaced, because Egypt's loss would by no means be Israel's gain.

I strongly doubt—I would have said in conclusion—whether the Israeli government missed any real opportunities for accommodation before the Six-Day War. Before 1967 there was virtually no willingness on the part of the Arabs to accept the existence of Israel. Nor was there anything of importance that Israel could have given up and still remain a viable state. This is certainly not the case today. Admittedly, an accommodation with the Egyptians would not necessarily mean the end of Fatah acts of sabotage; some Arab leaders would no doubt continue talking about the coming destruction of Israel. But Israel could live with this as well as with the Fatah pinpricks. If the Arab countries were to get a "peace with honor," if some of the bones of contention were to be removed, the "Israeli danger," which in the past overshadowed everything else (and incidentally made for national and inter-Arab solidarity), would in all probability cease to dominate Arab politics. The Arab leaders would have other urgent problems to face. The Fatah realize this and therefore oppose any partial solution; they know that the momentum of the "holy war" would be irretrievably lost.

I am not sure whether I could have said all this on television with the utter conviction of a professional politician. Probably not. The subject is far too sensitive for discussion on TV anyway, and no doubt I would have ended up pulling my punches.

****

THE day I left, I remembered the day thirty-three years earlier when I had first arrived. Then, too, there was real trouble; one had to get a special permit from the British army to travel to Jerusalem. It was a much smaller Tel Aviv at which we disembarked, and it was a different *Yishuv*; few people bothered to lock their doors. The first night I was put up by perfect strangers; I forget their name and where they lived. I met a friend walking in the street reading Schopenhauer and another studying Franz Rosenzweig. There were no luxury apartments, and so few privately owned cars that "taxi" was the synonym for any automobile. One thinks back with some nostalgia to those bygone days. But of course it could not last; Israel was bound to become a normal country. Measured by the absolute standards of the utopians it may well be a great disappointment, but in an imperfect world this is not at all a bad country. Above all it is still very much unfinished, one of the few places on earth where one feels much of the time that individual and collective initiative may yet affect the outcome of events. The smallness of the country is a source of weakness in international affairs, but in other respects smallness has certain blessings which, I suspect, can be fully realized only on the spot.

Commentary Discussion Groups

Start-Your-Own-Discussion-Group-Kit available—FREE. Included are complete directions on how to start a group, detailed directions to run the group, plus invitations, etc.

COMMENTARY DISCUSSION GROUPS
165 East 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

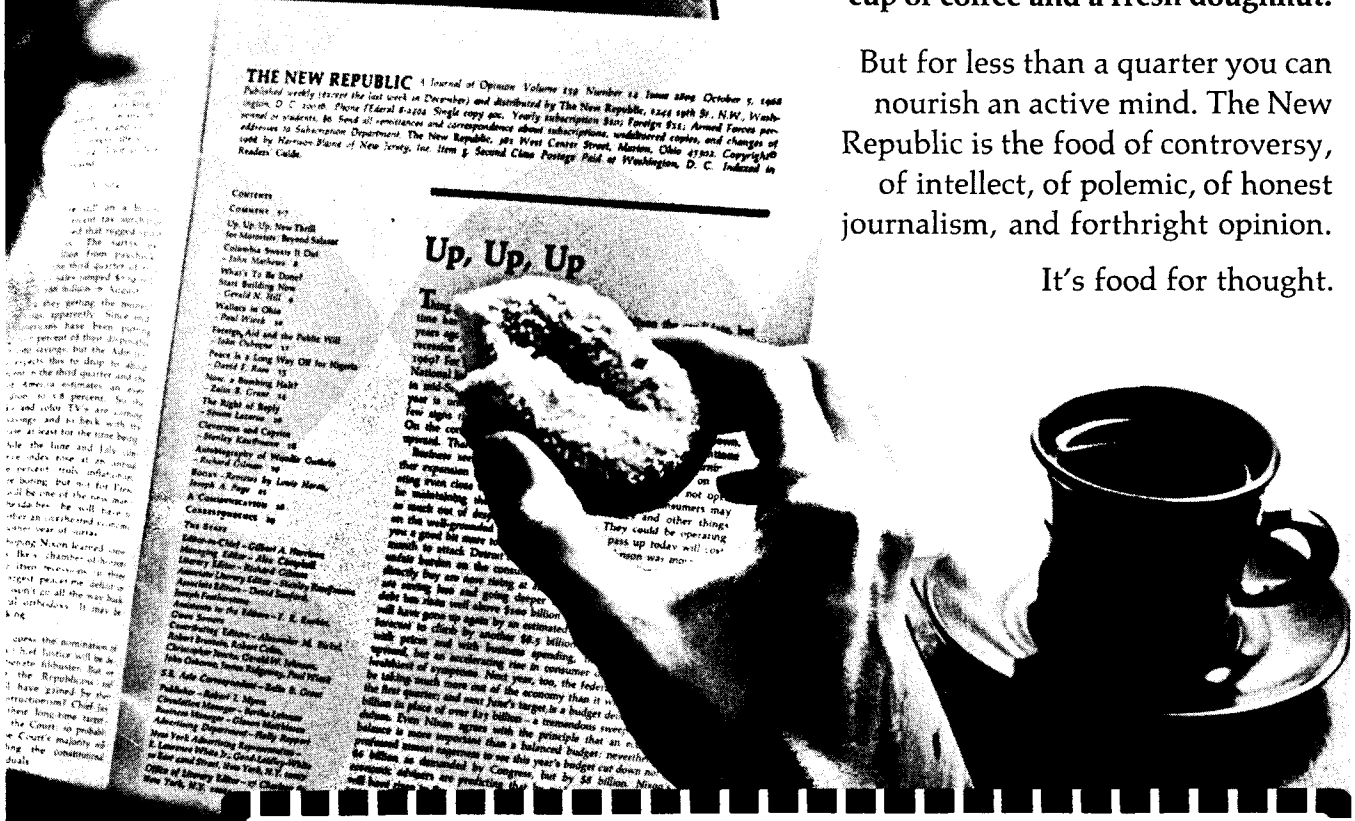
Soul Food

all you can digest for less than a quarter

Today, twenty-five cents won't buy a good cup of coffee and a fresh doughnut.

But for less than a quarter you can nourish an active mind. The New Republic is the food of controversy, of intellect, of polemic, of honest journalism, and forthright opinion.

It's food for thought.



THE NEW REPUBLIC

What Price Victory?
Hans J. Morgenthau

Send me the New Republic for 23 weeks and bill me $4.30 ☐
or 46 weeks for $8.25 ☐

Mail to: Circulation Department
The New Republic, 381 W. Center St., Marion, Ohio 43302

Name

Address

City State Zip

C-5

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Apocalyptic Thinking

Samuel McCracken

For an observer with a moderately developed sense of history, and the most moderate standard of excellence, it can be an unbearable suspicion that his time and space may turn out to have been absolutely undistinguished. Dr. Pangloss and G. F. Babbitt warded off the dread thought by assuring themselves that it was the best of all possible worlds; Victorian optimists warded it off with the more modest notion of progress. The second of these views —with an obligatory codicil about how much there is to be done—lives on, but not among intellectuals, who are more likely to claim a sort of anti-distinction for the age and to take authentic delight in living in the worst of all possible worlds.

Of course, anyone who can neither see Lyndon Johnson as more wicked than Hitler or Stalin, nor Richard Nixon as the Antichrist, has not even the consolation of excelling in the lack of excellence. Such a person might, however, find another consolation—hitherto available only to religious fundamentalists—in the reflection that an access of degeneracy has traditionally been thought to signal the advent of the Last Days. Two thousand years ago, almost to the minute, the air was throbbing with apocalypse, and so it did a thousand years ago, and so it does today with another millennium soon to end and the year 2000 in sight. The Christian fundamentalists are at it as usual, greatly encouraged by an ancient prophecy according to which the Last Days will be immediately preceded by the restoration of Jewish rule over Jerusalem; and fundamentalism's newest and grooviest sect, the Jesus Freaks, are especially attracted to chiliastic thought.

There are other mind-sets among us apparently apocalyptic, but only apparently: the agenda of the Revolution and its prophecies. For though the revolutionary impulse does indeed have a certain topographical relationship to the apocalyptic, seeking—in our time, at least—to hurry along the millennium, revolution and apocalypse are nevertheless ultimately antithetical, as can be seen in the reception serious revolutionaries gave *The Greening of America*. Charles A. Reich no less than St. John the Divine, so the response ran, is in the opiate-for-the-people racket. Indeed so. Reich is the most profoundly counterrevolutionary author of our day, for nothing could be calculated more effectively to dampen revolutionary ardor than the argument that the Bastille will crumble if we will just sit outside it and groove for a while.

But I have been talking of the apocalypse without defining it. I suppose the etymological pedant would limit the term to its original meaning, that of taking away the veil, while the etymological slob would expand it to include the whole realm of the sensational and mind-blowing. I steer a middle course: an apocalypse is a revelation about the future—understood as possibly 3:45 this afternoon—sometimes clairvoyant in provenance, sometimes extrapolatory. Although the apocalyptic impulse springs from a concern with the future, that concern, in its search for pre-apocalyptic symptoms, frequently deals with the present and past. An apocalyptic revelation might in theory be a crashing bore ("Behold, I say unto you, an age of no particular interest is upon you") but all apocalypses worth attention rival the original one of St. John in scope and surprise value. Today, however, apocalypse is in a process of at least partial secularization, and it generally appears before us not in the language of divine revelation but in the profane dress of journalism and history.

One of the best-known recent examples of apocalypse disguised as journalism is Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock*.* Toffler's thesis has just enough simple grandeur to provoke skepticism: change dizzily accelerates (this proven by an endless succession of statistics and other examples); such acceleration in turn makes people physically and psychically sick (this demonstrated by summaries of some recent research correlating change and illness); and to avoid an apocalyptic crisis, the earliest stages of which are upon us (demonstrated

Samuel McCracken, who teaches literature and the humanities at Reed College in Oregon, contributed "The Drugs of Habit and the Drugs of Belief" to our June number.

* Random House, 505 pp., $8.95; Bantam Books, $1.95. The latter edition is available in a choice of colors, evidently an attempt to induce the ailment the book describes.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by attributing practically anything objectionable in the culture to incipient future shock), we must raise up a breed of futurist cicerones who will peer into the abyss and lead us into it. All this is set forth in a highly Lucid style (the author is a former *Fortune* editor) in which the words "incredible" and "fantastic" appear often enough to last this reader a twelve-month, sandwiched in between repeated dark statements to the effect that "it is no accident that" or "it is not by chance that" this or that is the case, to the effect, if not with the intent, that once one has said what a relationship is *not*, one is absolved from saying what it *is*.

An author who writes on so many topics ought, doubtless, to be reviewed by a committee, but even the narrowly educated reader will note some difficulties. Thus, surveying the history of speed, from camel to rocket, Toffler observes an impressive and accelerating rate of acceleration, from 8 to 18,000 mph, the increment having been 12 mph the first 4½ centuries, 80 mph in the next 3½, 300 mph in the next six decades, 400 mph in the next two, and 17,200 mph in the next two or three years. *Gee-whiz*! one is tempted to chorus in harmony with Toffler's characteristic tone, until one recalls that only a handful of people on earth have experienced 18,000 mph, which (so I am told) is in free-fall much like any other speed you'd care to mention; of lay Americans only a minority have experienced 600 mph; of the world at large, only a tiny minority.

Moreover, the onset of acceleration, once one begins to worry about the nervous systems of real people rather than that nerveless abstraction called technology, is a function of the 19th century, not the 20th. Between 1820 and 1848 the available land speed rose by a factor of 6, a rate of increase not duplicated or exceeded since. Even more traumatic than such increases in personal speed ought to have been those attained by information, the telegraph, like the railway, having become available by mid-century. The telegraph annihilated of a sudden the geographical imperative with which man had lived from the rise of the camel until its minor amelioration by the railway. If change be in principle traumatic, the sudden increase in the range over which there might be knowledge of nearly simultaneous action—from the distance to the horizon to thousands of miles—and in the speed of transmission—from 8 mph to 186,000 mph—ought to have been a real shocker. Why then did the Victorians not suffer from future shock?

In the here-and-now, Toffler tells us, one of the symptoms of future shock is premature senility. Who are the prematurely senile among us? Why, people of thirty-five who don't like the "new," a euphemism for, among other things, student riots. It used to be, so it seems from Toffler's account, that no one got to the stage of objecting to such novelties until all he could do was to pound his cane feebly on the floor next to his wheelchair and mumble toothless imprecations. Now most of us get there in the full vigor of early middle age. But neither are the young spared: they understand what is up no more than their prematurely senile parents, because they are ignorant of any past with which to compare the present. (Well, from my experience, not quite of *any* past. Many of them routinely compare the present with a mythical past which flourished in the Deuteropaleolithic Age, from 1950 to 1960.)

Toffler presents a great deal of evidence for the assertion that we live in a wildly transient age: the rise of the disposable, the mobile, and the rentable; the increasing evanescence of the family; and the like. Some of this material is quite striking, although Toffler is often very naive in his handling of it, as is the case with the linguistic argument he advances: from the unwarranted assumption that the English lexicon was as large in the 16th century as now, and the undoubted fact that a great many words have been coined since then, he draws the ludicrous conclusion that at least 200,000 words, perhaps several times that many, have dropped out of the language since Shakespeare. The most obvious test of this theory, one would think, would be reading Shakespeare to see whether he is intelligible. Apparently the expedient was not resorted to. Further, slang terms out of immediate fashion are presumed by Toffler to have become unintelligible. Here, as elsewhere, he fails to array, let alone confront, any contrary evidence. A good deal of the slang of the 1920's notoriously remains with us, in a sort of museum permanent-collection, as well as such syntactic medievalisms as "willy-nilly." Consider also the extraordinary durability of comic strips: how many now running were created before World War II? Before World War I?

Since Toffler admits—or is it claims?—that any of his observations may have become outdated by press time, it is perhaps unfair to tax him with what is happening to disposable bottles and cans. It does seem odd that a population allegedly addicted to the impermanent bottle, with which it need have no enduring relationship, should be happily contemplating the return of the returnable. But one of the nifty features of Toffler's thesis is the ease with which it can dispose of such an objection. Is there evidence of permanence, claims for transience notwithstanding? Such evidence is no more than symptom of a culture shot through with transience, longing for stability. Can't find some of the conditions cited as evidence for runaway change? Just goes to show you how fast things are changing. Now you see it, now you don't. *Plus ça change*. . . .

WHILE Toffler is aware that technology has its problems, his cheery assurance that it will all work out if one takes

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the long view is enough to make some schools of Neo-Luddite pessimism look tolerable. It is, he says, slanderous to accuse technology of wanting to standardize everything, for standardization is an artifact of primitive mass production, whereas the super-industry now benevolently cradling us has learned to produce the unique as cheaply as the uniform. Our only problem is going to be resisting a paralysis of the will in the face of a stultifying *embarras de richesses.*

Perhaps so, but not on the basis of the evidence adduced. The bellwether of the coming diversity, sprung on us by Toffler with all the earnestness of a Ford ad, is the Mustang, available, so it is pointed out, in x bodies times y engines times z transmissions, not to mention variations in color and trim. One can, of course, prove that there are no duplicates whatever of anything if one wants to tune one's perceptions fine enough; but to bellyfeel the diversity of the Mustang herd would require fine perception indeed, perhaps the order of perception which Reich attributes to the Stoning of Consciousness III. Rapt in his 10^n combinations of interiors and exteriors, Toffler forgets that all those steeds look like each other, and like the competition. (Or the competition like them. One must be fair to Ford.) The time is long past—as a consequence of the aesthetically pernicious process of slapping two patterns of bright metal trim on the same body shell and calling the result two makes—when any car had the distinctive personality of, say, Buick 1938-1949. If one no longer identifies the make and year of passing cars, the reason may just be that they all look alike now. Technology's idea of diversity, as explicated by Toffler, is to give you tulips with the widest choice possible of streak-color. He attains self-parody in another example of the New Diversity: cigarettes. Well, maybe if someone came out with a *square* cigarette, or a *safe* one. But as things are, he sounds just like Sinclair Lewis's Lowell Schmaltz (The Man Who Knew Coolidge) epitomizing diversity in Zenith:

> "There's a lot of sorehead critics of America that claim we're standardized but . . . this fellow and me—we're as different as Moses and Gene Tunney. Where these poor devils of Europeans are crushed down and prevented from having their characters developed by the wide and free initiative so characteristic of American life, George and me can be friendly, and yet as different. . . . Well, like this, for instance. I drive a Chrysler, and Babbitt doesn't. I'm a Congregationalist, and Babbitt has no use whatsomever for anything but his old Presbyterian church. He wears these big spectacles and you couldn't hire me to wear anything but eyeglasses. . . . He's got so he likes golf for its own sake, and I'd rather go fishing, any day. . . . Yes sir, it's a wonderful thing how American civilization, as represented, you might say, by *modern advertising, has encouraged . . .* the free play of individualism."

But when technology in Toffler's world is not producing Babbitt's Delights, it is getting out of hand, and Toffler devotes the last part of his book to getting it under control. Here he proposes some home remedies for the disease of future shock, among which is the curious advice that one learn to forget information for which one is not going to have any further use. Both future shock and runaway technology, however, will best be treated, Toffler thinks, by public-health programs, primarily the establishment of Councils of the Future, which will operate in a variety of organizational contexts and provide advice on probable futures. Under the aegis of such institutions, man's regrettable preoccupation with the past will be turned round to the future, which will become the subject of courses and games, providing him with a sort of Mothersill's Remedy against the *mal de temps* threatened by each new dawn.

Of any serious thought about the social and governmental structures which will apply the wisdom thus generated, the book is innocent. Society even now does a certain amount of futurizing, and there is not yet any consensus as to what is to come and what is to be done about it. That historians sometimes experience a certain difficulty in agreeing about the past—which, after all, did happen—suggests that future futurists and their clients may find consensus about the future —which, after all, has *not*—nearly as elusive.

Finally, Toffler's work is charged with a fatal contradiction inherent in pop futurism. In order to show that disaster is staring us in the eyeball, or that the future is going to be very different, or whatever, it becomes necessary to rely on the notion of accelerating change so heavily that prescription becomes increasingly risky. If the present is to be altered all out of recognition, then there is no guarantee as to the rate of change which will be characteristic of the remote future. Even the celebrated but not terribly helpful remark of Heraclitus, to the effect that nothing endures but change, leaves the futurist with the difficulty of treating a patient whose sole symptom is that his symptoms are in flux. Long-term planning becomes difficult, if not indeed impossible, for those committed to the notion of apocalyptic change.

THE other best-selling apocalyptician, Charles A. Reich, totters inconclusively between scientific and religious chiliasm. Andrew Greeley has recently provided a remarkable exposition of *The Greening of America* as apocalypse,* and so I can content myself here with some desultory remarks. Reich is nearly post-apocalyptic, arguing as he does that Consciousness III has already landed and is on the way to

* "The Redeeming of America According to Charles Reich," *America*, January 9, 1971.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

inevitable triumph, as believers in the old dispensation die or convert. The causes of the late apocalypse, like so much in the book, are obscure; it would seem that the contradictions of Con I led to Con II, and those of Con II, with the midwifely assistance of a kindly old crone named Mary Jane, gave birth to Con III, which, like socialist society in the Marxian vision, has no contradictions worth worrying about. But while the era of socialist man is always just over the horizon, the era of Consciousness III can begin in earnest just as soon as all those tiresome people over eighteen become III- or un-persons. The event thus posited makes even the Christian apocalypse seem a little tame, since what has been changed in the twinkling of an eye is nothing so limited as the universe, but human nature itself. By comparison with this Panglossian annihilation of all problems without pain or expense, *Love Story*—that other product of Yale's Ezra Stiles College—is a hard-hatted grapple with reality.

More interesting than Reich, though far less well-known, is William Irwin Thompson,* an author apparently determined to play a belated Darwin to Reich's Huxley. As befits a brilliant and learned young man of thirty-two, Thompson proclaims his apocalypse with wry, almost mocking detachment. Less ironically cool is the prose on the jacket of his book, where he is said to end up "demolishing the identity of history itself." It is a little book for such a big feat, but crammed within the 163 pages of the text proper is learning so diverse that no reader is likely to feel cheated for quantity.

Of this astonishing quest after the hide of the historical dragon which has so long ravaged the fields of consciousness, there are two heroes: the author and William Butler Yeats. The former, constantly alluding to the latter, takes us on an expedition to the dragon's lair via Los Angeles, Esalen, M.I.T., Canada, Yucatan, and points outward.

The encounter with Los Angeles and environs is straightforward enough, even predictable. With regard to L.A., I myself plan to emulate Dudley Fitts, who refused to read *Silas Marner* lest he spoil the appreciation and understanding of that novel gained from countless College Board papers. I cannot therefore speak to the accuracy of Thompson's account, but he seems in accord with my own Virgils (Nathanael West and S. J. Perelman). The whole city is a movie set where people therapeutically act out their fantasies; they are always ten years ahead of the wicked East, and the future consequently keeps outcropping, just now showing as a Prevue of Coming Attractions the colossal epic of man's transformation from *homo faber* into *homo ludens*.

The distance between the ridiculous and the sublime is easily compassed in the trip from Los Angeles to Esalen, where Thompson appears to have made some sort of transcendental discovery under the influence of Zen-baked bread. (The importance of bread to the counter-culturists is excessive, even for a staff of life.)

The seminar which drew Thompson Esalenward seems pretty dreary in the telling, perhaps as much to the writer as to the reader. The high point came late. As Thompson was recounting an epiphany vouchsafed him in the National Library at Dublin, to the effect that he was "the only available writer on Irish literature and politics" who could possibly write his book (the sort of epiphany also occasionally vouchsafed other authors, but perhaps one best thought better of at less inspired moments), in burst Joan Baez, acting, as Thompson told her right to her face, like "Maude Gonne screaming at Yeats to stop writing poems and start shooting Englishmen." The comparison appears to have silenced her, after which triumph it was back to the baths for a bit and on to a folk-rock concert on the cliffs. Thompson and others danced about a pregnant blonde, and hey presto! "there at the edge of the Pacific you could feel the future blowing in your face and see all the new cultures streaming behind into the wake of history, where they would come to rest in the museums of New York and Europe. . . . I leaned against the wall and thought: At twenty-nine in the summer of 1967, I danced in the twenty-first century, and in the dark remaining years ahead I will remember this free-for-all† of Pacific sound and light." Doubtless all very heady stuff, and doubtless familiar to anyone who has been to a good party with good friends. But this particular gush of emotion recollected in tranquility illustrates a central fallacy of futurism: the self-intoxicated optimism which identifies a portion of the present one likes as a portion of the future.

From the cliffs Thompson descends to M.I.T., where he labored some years, and from which he came away with a dislike of the new industrial state as intense as, but a good deal more coherent than, that of Charles Reich. Neither of the two cultures at M.I.T.—which he sees as radical humanism and liberal science—took his fancy, and he is quite as acidly effective looking at the one as the other, although his critique of the former is perhaps the more pointed:

> Freed by his Marxist materialism of the feudal nobility that would suggest that evil is within the revolutionary and his movement as well as outside himself in capitalist society, [the radical humanist] rages with a blindness that prevents him from seeing the vices of his friends and the virtues of his enemies. . . . in encounters one is subjected to a suspicion of the past which

* *At the Edge of History: Speculations on the Transformation of Culture*, Harper & Row, 163 pp., $6.95.

† Note to anyone heading for Big Sur and the 21st century, or whatever is playing now: take money. Esalen is *not* free for all.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

amounts to a wilfully self-imposed ignorance: "I won't teach Autobiography and Identity because the self is a bourgeois personalist fiction."

Retreating then to a Canadian exile (which now may seem less "The Peaceable Kingdom" than it did a year ago), Thompson constructs an alternative third position—a theory of historical evolution displayed in a series of increasingly complex mandalas tracing the constituents of society at any stage back to four figures: shaman, hunter, headman, and clown. Such schematizations, no less than TV diagrams of the route an antacid takes from gullet to stomach, provide useful employ for deserving draftsmen; but for anyone linear enough to have learned to read, one wonders whether they say any more than simple prose.

In the remainder of the book Thompson goes on to deal with an extraordinary range of fringe-cultural phenomena, down to and including the Edgar Cayce fad, all tending to the conclusion that we are on the edge of history in a quite literal sense. We have erred in interpreting the past, and may well be mistaken in assuming that there is going to be a future, or at least a future which is no more than an extension of past and present. Before settling down to this demolition of history, Thompson undertakes a brief inquest upon the body of official, academic futurism, wherein such persons as Daniel Bell and Herman Kahn are said to "lack the imagination to see the whole wheel of fire and [to be able to view reality only] from the very limited perspective of the routine-operational mentality. They are simply blind to anything that is not supportive of the liberal-industrial world view." If nothing else is made clear in the intellectual peregrinations to follow, it is that Thompson's *Weltanschauung* is under no such constraints. He sees whatever wheels of fire may be.

In 1967, he points out, the most widely read authority on the year 2000 was not Daniel Bell, but Edgar Cayce, as represented by his biographer Jess Stearn.* Desultory researches into the matter tend to confirm Thompson's assertion that the benighted professional classes are comparatively unaware of the Cayce vogue among the lower-middle class and The Kids. Hence the following excursus into Cayce and Caycism, toward a more general appreciation of a book and a figure which provide a great deal of the intellectual impetus, if that is the phrase I want, for the lower reaches of current occult-futuristic thought.

Cayce's life is shortly told: born Hopkinsville, Kentucky, 1877; settled in Virginia Beach, where he pursued the calling of photographer; uneducated, kindly, charming; conservative Presbyterian; about 1900, began to go into a trance twice daily, during which he produced advice and prophecy on a wide variety of subjects, principally medicine, religion, and politics; died Virginia Beach, 1945, survived by a circle of enthusiastically publishing hierophants, whose writings are based on stenographic transcripts of his "readings," as the sleeping pronouncements were called.

Although Cayce made the *Times* in 1910, he exists now as a public figure largely through the medium of Stearn's best-seller. The claims therein are of a familiar class, The-Perfectly-Extraordinary-If-They-Are-Literally-True. Cayce is alleged to have predicted the dates of both world wars; but one looks in vain for a text of the prophecy. He could cure any disease, sometimes by prescribing Castoria, sometimes by the application of a flayed rabbit to the sufferer. (The hierophants make much of the eventual development of a line of cancer research in which antibodies are grown in rabbit-blood.) Cayce's medical practice, only occasionally interrupted by an insensitive Law, exploiting patent medicines and principles one can only call hypereclectic, was so successful that there remain to this day practitioners of the healing art—Stearn tactfully calls them "therapists"—who treat with the old original recipes, now accessible in the collections of the Association for Research and Enlightenment at Virginia Beach.

But it is as a prophet for the latter 20th century that Cayce has become a cult-figure. The prophecies, as one might have anticipated, lead up to a grand climax in the year 2000. The start of the final phase, according to Cayce, came in 1936, when the earth's polar axis—as opposed to its non-polar one—shifted sufficiently to have serious seismic consequences. Stearn, in dealing with Cayce the Scientist, did not trust to the untutored instincts of a simple reporter, but pressed into his service an authority known in his pages simply as The Geologist.† The Geologist meanders through the book, amiably checking out Cayce's scientific expertise, more often than not in the *Britannica*. He takes it as quite probable that the earth's axis *did* shift in 1936. Now, we hear a great deal about the pernicious effect of compartmentalization in the sciences, but I had not realized that a Geologist would keep his eyes quite so invariably on the earth beneath him. He seems not to have noticed the relationship of the earth's axis to such trivial phenomena as the seasons and the appearance of the sky. Were Cayce right, no astronomer would be able to use his atlases to find anything in the sky. But if Cayce missed this consequence of a shift of the earth's axis, he predicted even more sensational ones: great earthquakes ravaging New York and California, with Atlantis heaving into view off

* *Edgar Cayce—The Sleeping Prophet*, Bantam Books, 287 pp., 95¢.

† Thompson discusses the catastrophic paleoentomologist Manson Valentine, who shares with The Geologist not only a discipline but also a strong interest in Atlantis.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the Bahamas. (Senator Goldwater will no doubt be cheered to hear that New York is finally going to get it: the fault lies along 14th Street, should provident readers wish to make their plans accordingly.) This future, curiously enough, is also in the past, a wonder of science brought to us by reincarnation. For we—some of us, at least—are quondam Atlanteans, who, having mucked up one perfectly good continent by hitting the laser beams too heavily, are now being given a second chance.

But enough, enough. Every popular fantasy is here, all validated by emission from what Stearn is pleased to call the Universal Mind of Edgar Cayce, and all of it swallowed by the hierophants with an intensity which makes one unusually wishful that Mencken were living at this hour. One future shock which does seem to be upon us is the extent to which universal literacy and the paperback allow irresponsible journalists to diffuse the sort of misknowledge compared to which ignorance, if not downright bliss, is damn near intellectually respectable. Not just journalists: one of Cayce's merchandisers is Harmon H. Bro, Ph.D., "the only trained social scientist ever to study Cayce extensively at first hand," who is eloquent about the majestic prose of the "readings," many of which to my insensitive ear seem to have been incompetently translated out of the original Extragalactish: "Just so is there the result in England, just so the conglomerate force in America. Just so are the domination forces in Japan, China. Just so in Russia is there the new birth, out of which will come a new understanding. Italy—selling itself for a mess of pottage. Germany—a smear upon its forces for dominance over its brother, a leech upon the universe for its own sustenance."

Unlike most prophets, Cayce was rarely shy about specifying exact dates, and thus good sport can be had matching up prophecies and fulfillment. But the prose style of the Universal Mind is so fuzzy, and its scientific knowledge so imperfect, that the force of the predictions, perhaps great for the totally ignorant, becomes feeble for the moderately informed. A proper skepticism about received truth ought to make any claim, no matter how bizarre, subject to testing, but the present state of Cayce studies hardly allows the scholarly mind to operate on the problem. The first qualified researcher to hit up a foundation for a year at the Association for Research and Enlightenment might be able to correct the situation.

Whatever such a study would reveal, Thompson, without exactly joining the AR&E, fudgily suggests that the "readings" might reflect actual history. He himself states neatly the epistemological assumptions which lead him into this position: ". . . classes can be so interest-bound that they cannot perceive reality outside the terms that sustain their power . . . it is extremely important that we adopt an alien point of view—if only to open our minds and free ourselves of the ethnocentrism of our former position." The thesis presented here is no doubt fundamental for your working apocalyptician, permitting as it does any nonsense to attain a certain *éclat* as long as it is *different* nonsense. Once one is willing to treat a taste for reason as a quirk of ethnicity—the ethnic group in question here being the intellectuals—one will not long be troubled by the inconvenient constraints of evidence and proof.

Thompson believes that academics cannot free themselves from the dreadful managerial assumptions of liberalism—the product of the military-rational complex—because the academy is so hard on heretics. In support of this charge he cites the case of Dr. Immanuel Velikovsky. I am, of course, quite incompetent to judge the theories of Velikovsky, and must rely on the almost universally negative reaction of the qualified. However, about the quite different question of whether Velikovsky got a fair hearing, I am in considerable doubt. A number of distinguished professional astronomers took part in a textbook boycott of his publisher, leading finally to the transfer of a hot best-seller to a house with no text division. Certainly, in the soft, bellelettristic quarter of the academy I inhabit, such an action would be unthinkable. Some of the reviews of the book by professionals appear to me to have seriously misquoted Velikovsky's position, and some of these in turn appear to have continued in circulation uncorrected.

Velikovsky, in short, was treated like a crank. Cranks, to be sure, abound on the fringes of natural science—a colleague of mine in physics is incessantly favored with the publications of a gentleman who has replaced the theory of gravity with the assumption that the radius of the earth is expanding infinitely, and that thus it was a moving Newton who zoomed up to hit an apple at rest—and one can well understand that professionals develop the sort of impatience that literary historians develop for Baconians. Still, Velikovsky's earlier career was not exactly that of a crank. And some of the assumptions of Velikovsky's hypothesis originally taken as least likely —that Venus is quite hot, and has hydrocarbons in her atmosphere, and that Jupiter ought to be a powerful radio source—have subsequently been confirmed by orthodox science. Whether a massive study of Velikovsky's work would in any particular alter the original negative response I cannot judge; but the cases of Copernicus, Galileo, and Darwin indicate that the scientific community needs to be very careful about distinguishing cranks from heretics. In an age when such as Thompson—and his followers here are legion —tend to award a handicap to the *outré,* the need is going if anything to increase, simply to avoid

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

feeding counter-cultural notions of "Establishment" reality vs. the "real" reality.

The history of thought can show any number of minority reports on the state of the universe, nearly all sensational in their implications. Such reports—re-visionings, as Thompson calls them—have generally been tendered with little consequence, but an occasional one has shaken the earth. It is too early definitely to categorize the current crop of apocalyptic re-visionings, but there is certainly enough evidence for an interim verdict. Thompson, for example, for all his brilliant and brittle erudition, manages an occasional howler:

> [The idea of Atlantis] is not as absurd as it may seem if one stops to think of the lacunae in historical time. Five hundred years ago Columbus crossed the ocean in a bloated rowboat and now we are walking on the moon. In historical reckoning five hundred years is often the carbon-14 increment of plus or minus 250 years, so there are many places in history where we leap over centuries to the next fact simply because we have nothing to fill up the space. A civilization could have arisen in 10,500 B.C., climaxed in 10,000, and destroyed itself by 9500.

Very neat. As long as one forgets two little problems: a) getting your civilization from −10,000 to 1492, Columbus and his culture having represented a certain advance from that first date; and b) annihilating your civilization *without* a *trace*. Occasions such as this, when re-visioning depends on fantasy or sophomoric logic, makes one wonder how often elsewhere, in ways as ludicrous but less obvious, enthusiasm has overmastered good sense.

But let us imagine that all these re-visionings are well-founded. How revelatory are they? Is there any difference between re-vision and revision? If the Atlantis myth (about which Cayce, Thompson, and others make such a great to-do) turns out to be true, the major re-visioning will be of the history of Atlantis, the minor of our new understanding of certain cultures as degenerate rather than primitive. Nothing is revised by the major re-vision, Atlantis having heretofore *had* no history, and the minor is hardly any more astounding than the insights of orthodox revisionism, as exemplified, say, by A.J.P. Taylor's *The Origins of the Second World War*. And more important: barring a Revelation, the historicity of Atlantis will have to be demonstrated by one of the tools of orthodox history, namely archaeology. Should the tool so serve, the discovery will doubtless be a nine-years' wonder: but the methodological development will hardly deserve so pretentious a name as re-vision.

PERHAPS the most widespread manifestation of apocalypticism today is to be found not in the taste for the occult and the irrational, but in an area which at first glance seems far removed from the apocalyptic spirit: the formation of educational policy and pedagogic theory. For assuming that an entirely new situation is upon us, a great deal of educational theory now proceeds on the belief that the basic tenets by which the theorists themselves were educated have become totally unsatisfactory for educating their charges. This belief—which permeates grant proposals in their thousands, memoranda in their millions—has recently been set forth with considerable distinction, attention to detail, and an often delicious sense of irony by Judson Jerome in *Culture out of Anarchy: The Reconstruction of American Higher Learning*.*

Jerome begins by identifying a diverse group of people who are desperate for self-realization: blacks, youth, women, and Judson Jerome. It is not quite clear whether he is the only middle-aged white male with such longings, but there he is, "lying on the glare-bright table of the 70's like a fish whose lungs are pumping insubstantial air," longing, so it would seem, for the moister 60's. The crisis-laden atmosphere reeks of apocalypse, which is not long in the proclaiming: "A culture is dying. A culture is gasping to be born. These themes permeate this book, which only incidentally uses higher education as its evidence of a larger transformation in which we are all participating."

The Last Days having been heralded, the book which follows is thoroughly exasperating, shot through with fatuities worthy of its first sentence, but containing also a good deal of insight, good sense, and first-rate educational reportage. Jerome has the unhappily rare habit of leavening his misinterpretations of phenomena with descriptions so clear and honest that the reader is enabled to make an independent assessment.

Both the culture and the anarchy are located in innovative higher education† before viewing which Jerome surveys the traditional scene with traditional alarm. It is the sort of exercise which marks all apocalypticians, sacred and profane. Indeed, the resemblances between the innovationists and the Protestant fundamentalists are more than superficial: although the former regard their program, often incorrectly, as one of novelty rather than of restoration, it is in fact a fundamentalist stripping away of what are taken to be

* Herder and Herder, 330 pp., $9.50; paperback, $3.95.

† I wish there were an accurate and neutral name for the educational party of which Jerome is a member. At one college of my acquaintance, the term "the feelies" has gained some endurance; but even if I wanted to give the word wider currency, Jerome is a very right-wing feelie. I shall fall back on the label "innovationists," not that I believe everything the party stands for is innovation, nor that innovation is limited to it; but it is the party which has made a god of innovation, and there is some precedent for naming religious parties in terms of their god. The reader must imagine when I say "innovationists" a tone appropriate to a 2nd-century Roman bureaucrat saying "Christians."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

non-essentials, in the interest of instant salvation. There is also in the innovationist party a certain intolerance and fondness for Philippic reminiscent of the radio evangelist.

The smuggest observer, of course, of the campus today has trouble lighting his face with an infectious grin. But of what culture or when has this not been true? The 13th century was sound on stained glass, the 20th on poliomyelitis. It is in the hyperventilated atmosphere of public relations that crisis is blown up to apocalypse, and what used to be known as the condition of man seen as evidence for his approaching demise. But the burden of demonstrating an apocalypse is still upon the apocalyptician, at least if he is a secular apocalyptician and not consciously speaking as a Seer with a Revelation to bring. The claim being that apocalyptic conditions surround us in the here-and-now, it is susceptible of proof like any other claim about the real world.

What then is Jerome's proof? "I hear students telling me what I never had the guts or imagination to say: the system isn't working. The whole network of departments, fields, areas, credits, requirements, courses, grades, which we have accepted as the design of higher education, does not relate coherently to human learning and experience. Now the network is collapsing of his [*sic*: its?] Byzantine weight." Now, I have it on the authority of Magnus Arbuthnot himself that what is Byzantine is complexity, never weight; but there is something else more disturbing here. Note the qualities the lack of which prevented Jerome from seeing reality: guts and imagination. What a diverse set of statements one might append to such a prologue as "I hear students telling me what I never had the guts or imagination to say": "That I really come from a flying saucer; that the academy is heart and soul part of the Vietnam war; that black is white," and so on and so on. But make it "guts and intelligence," and the list gets markedly shorter.

The complaint, at any rate, is familiar a thousand times over to anyone who has been in shouting distance of a campus these past few years. The time scale is significant. Most of the phenomena (on the whole accurately reported) Jerome cites as evidence for his diagnosis of catastrophic failure are recent indeed. With such a short-focus perspective, the nearest objects made large in proportion, it is easy to say that the system is not working. But one must distinguish the not-working from the unworkable. Jerome confuses the two: it is an endemic habit, with its analogues in the marketplace, particularly that of automobiles. It is often assumed that it makes sense to trade in—salvage, in effect—a car on the brink of major repairs, even if the depreciation on the first year of the new car would pay for the repairs twice over. In fact, of course, someone is always waiting to pay for the repairs on one's three-year-old model, and what seems not worth repairing to the first owner seems eminently so to the second.

To pursue this no doubt vulgar analogy a bit: it is easy enough to see whose interest is served when not-working cars are treated as not-workable, and by what devices the confusion is maintained for the new-car trade and straightened out for the used. Less so with the educational analogue. Why does Jerome rush to trade in the system on a new model? The major cause is, I suspect, a deficiency in historical perspective. One of the advantages of historical perspective, something from which the innovationists could profit, is the knowledge that crisis, being a recurring phenomenon, is a survivable one. He who knows this—who does not? one is tempted to ask, and the answer is that his name is Legion—is better prepared to meet the crisis with some hope that he is not going to add to it. At present the academy has no such luck: one component of the crisis is the hysterical reaction of the Jeromes, observers afflicted with time-referents calibrated in months, and by a perverse myth of progress which teaches that the line on the chart is headed inexorably and eternally down if something really big is not immediately done.

If one ignores the extent to which in the past the university has found itself upon evil days, and within itself found renewal, it is easy to see the alarums and excursions of the past few years as symptomatic of moribundity or worse. Such ignorance seems very common among apocalypticians, but the problem is not one simply of naiveté. For a sense of impending doom, as I noted at the beginning of this essay, need not be an entirely unlovely experience. He whose most cherished projects are not likely to be adopted short of the Last Days may well be forgiven if he greets the sound of beating hooves with mixed emotions. And those with a vested interest in educational Armageddon, like any devout fundamentalist, find comfort in the thought of an approaching *Dies Irae* on which the faithful will at last be recognized when and where it really counts. Apocalypse nourishes apocalypse in a nutritional chain to be broken only when it spawns a generation of prophets proclaiming, "Behold, I tell you a mystery: we shall not all change." The lust for novelty is sufficient that the day of such prophets may not be inconceivably remote.

WHEN he is not chanting *Dies Irae*, Jerome's eye for educational inanity, although sometimes merely cute, is generally acute. His account of a visit to an "emerging" state university has moments of high hilarity, notably an encounter with the English Department's tame Productive Scholar:

> "How do you do," says Professor Boggle. "Sorry to be late. I was in my office reading proofs. Just a revision of *Journey*," he says deprecating-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ly. ("You probably know *The Irish Journey*," my host fills me in. "Standard background for Joyce.")

His perceptions of folly are, however, colored by an attitude he enunciates at the outset:

> . . . many of us are people of basically conservative disposition, often with teen-age children, who could not in conscience live with the options available for young people in our society today. We have come almost reluctantly to the conclusion that if there is to be, willy-nilly, some kind of revolution in this country, we had better do what we can to make the damned thing *work*.

That is to say, someone has to ride the tiger. It need hardly be pointed out that in two recent revolutions there were parties with similar aspirations, and when the dust settled, the smile was on the face of the tiger. The planted axiom is the apocalyptic one, that there *is* to be a revolution, some sort of one, willy-nilly, and this idea often leads "people of basically conservative disposition, often with teen-age children" like Jerome, into a certain hysteria.

SOMETIMES the hysteria manifests itself in small lapses of critical surveillance. When the *Radical Chic Bartlett's* is finally compiled, one sure entry is going to be the following:

> The streets of our country are in turmoil. The universities are filled with students rebelling and rioting. Communists are seeking to destroy our country. Russia is threatening us with her might. And the Republic is in danger. Yes, danger from within and without. We need law and order! Yes, without law and order our nation cannot survive. We shall restore law and order.
>
> —Adolph Hitler, Hamburg, 1932

These remarks are always being Quoted Without Comment, and here they are affixed as epigraph to Jerome's Chapter 4, "As American as Apple Pie." The trouble is that the quotation appears to be bogus. Repeated efforts to trace it to Hitler have failed—as, indeed, anyone with even the most modest grasp of modern German history should have been able to guess they would. For one thing the supposed eulogist of law and order commanded a private army at that very date the *raison d'être* of which was violence in the streets, and which had itself for a time been suppressed by the Weimar authorities on law-and-order grounds. And for another, Hitler would no more have called the hated "November criminals" of the Weimar government the "Republic" than the *Black Panther* would call the Oakland Police Department "the police."

But Jerome is led into greater enormities. He seems quite sure that the tradition of liberal education is safe within the hands of the innovationist party. One might be more inclined to agree with him were it not for the examples he himself gives:

> [Within educational communes] it is only the content of liberal education which has changed . . . nor is intellectuality always scorned. [At an educational commune in Baltimore] what struck me, as we talked about vibrations and energy and levels of consciousness and the discipline of meditation, was the highly complex and learned quality of their study. There was a Rosicrucian intricacy about their range of reference and reasoning. . . . Astrology, which many students and college students seem obsessed with, is a popularization [!] of studies with deep intellectual roots. [One of the communards]: "We say 'Aquarian' because this is the age of intuition, and Aquarius is the sign of intuition, the sign of Christ consciousness. Each age is 2100 years. . . . The Aquarian age began, some people say 1870, some say as early as 1776, but it is generally agreed that we're well into it now. It's an air sign. Aquarius is the water-bearer, but an air sign means it's the holy spirit, and the spirit of wholeness, completeness and intuition. . . . We're at that state in the evolution of the racial consciousness."

Jerome displays more than enough intelligence to allow him to identify this piece of flatulent balderdash for what it is. But no,

> I am soon over my head as I try to keep up with the intellectual syntheses these people are trying to put together. Here are some excerpts from a taped conversation: "My main interest is in what I call a politics of incarnation. I'm interested in deriving a real politic from essentially religious and psychological observations. . . . Systems analysis applies incredibly well to the study of intuition. . . . Chomsky uses that . . . he's got a thing called methodological preliminaries, in his *Aspects of Syntax*, in which he outlines a method that fits very well. . . . Lévi-Strauss, the French anthropologist, has a thing in structural anthropology in which he comes up with some incredible data using a gestalt approach. . . . It's kind of freaky, complicated. . . ."

One is simply disconsolate to find Jerome finding this sort of fragmentary name-dropping impressive enough to quote, let alone to cite as intellectually taxing.

While such naive concessions to the idea that all learning is equally educational vitiate Jerome's pretensions as an educational theorist, his reportage of the current innovationist scene nevertheless remains highly effective, as in his account of Toronto's Rochdale College, surely one of the most depressing experiments in the history of higher education, and his treatment of a clutch of other innovationist institutions. None of these places does he see as paradise, and when they fail to deliver on major and highly ideological promises, he admits it with a candid humor rare in educational theorists of any school.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Despite its orientation, *Culture out of Anarchy* is the book to go to for data on the day-to-day problems, some of them serious, of an innovationist college. You will even learn that such places are often far more hostile and alienating than the uptight schools they are trying to improve on.

But the apocalyptic assumption allows Jerome to absorb what he sees without internalizing it, for anything is better than Armageddon. The vision of the Last Days is with him always, and under its influence he produces numerous passages of fashionable cant which live in uneasy coexistence with the cool reportage:

> Willy-nilly, American education is entering a libertarian phase (call it a supermarket if you will) in which it is relinquishing its power to control and prescribe and develop a capacity to respond. It is a pity that those of us involved —parents, professors, politicians—must be scared into change by outbreaks of anarchy. It is a pity we cannot show intellectual initiative rather than panic and rigidity at a time when the need is so great and the possibilities are so abundant.

It is not only by rigidity that men show panic.

WHERE will the current wave of apocalypticism all end up? Nathan Glazer, writing of Charles Reich,* has recently warned us to be very skeptical of people who tell us how bad things are, since such doomsaying has often been used to make intolerable programs seem tolerable. Now, while Alvin Toffler's prescriptions for meeting the future may seem benevolent enough, their successful embodiment would require a society totalitarian enough to make the Soviet system seem permissive. William Irwin Thompson has no program, nor is one easily to be inferred from his book; but belief that one is at the edge of history is not calculated to encourage either personal or social providence. While Judson Jerome's prescriptions are on the other side of totalitarian, heaven help the society educated on the principles of that Baltimore commune. And Charles A. Reich's vision of the apocalypse-in-being, quite apart from its substantive unpleasantness, amounts to a prescription for inaction which if followed closely in an industrial society would breed horror upon horror.

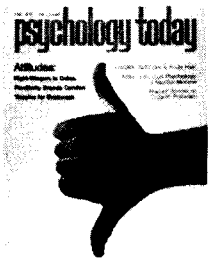
But the individual dangers of these thinkers are smaller than the collective one. Apocalyptic thinking, to twist the Italian proverb, is ill-found if it is not true, and to those of us not possessed of a special revelation, the imminence of Armageddon very much remains to be demonstrated. For us the antidote to apocalypticism is not to take no thought of the morrow, but rather to fall back on a habit of life which has always been the best specific against future shock: providence. By this I mean simply the habit of rationally evaluating present action in terms of likely consequence. To point out that a society is suffering from failures of providence—as ours certainly is—does not vitiate the value of providence. It just means that the society must get better at it. Short of an authentic divine revelation, the only way we can project the future is on the basis of the present, which, *faute de mieux*, we must assume to provide a ground for the rational extrapolation of trend. Perhaps there is some folk-wisdom in the tense system of the English language, which recognizes only past and present. For there can be no future until it appears in the present, and the present disappears into the past just as soon as we can perceive it. The present and the past, then, are all we have, and we must make the most of them.

* "The Peanut Butter Statement," *The New Leader*, December 14, 1970.

Reprints of this article are available at fifty cents each. Orders of 25 or more earn a twenty per cent discount.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

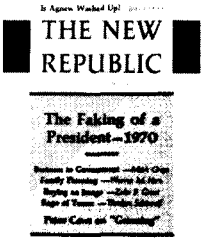
WHICH OF THESE SPECIAL INTEREST MAGAZINES SPECIALLY INTERESTS YOU?



This fascinating, immensely popular new magazine may tell you more about yourself than you care to know. Interested? Try it out at **half-price.**
1 year (12 issues) $6

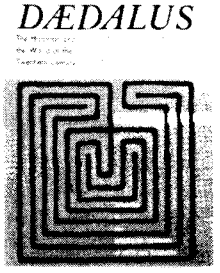
Vintage—for wine lovers, is full of valuable wine-buying information, wine history, locations of the best wine restaurants and information on wine itself. Guaranteed to save you the subscription price.
1 year (10 issues) $10

The monthly magazine devoted to the cultural and social revolution of our era, reflecting in its pages the new age of creative ferment.
1 year (12 issues) $9.00



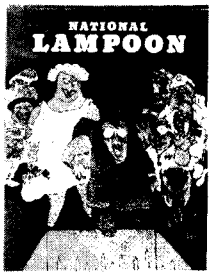
Stimulating commentary on politics and the arts from the best minds of our time. Viewpoint of this time-tested weekly: moderate to liberal.
1 year (48 issues) $12

The multiple-language magazine that provides its own translations. Articles and features in many languages. Ideal change-of-pace for students.
1 year (12 issues) $7



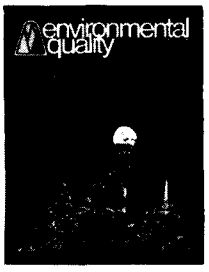
A quarterly journal devoted to public affairs, science, social sciences and the humanities. Each issue deals in depth with one subject—**The Embattled University, Woman in America,** for example.
1 year (quarterly) $8

What goes on **behind** the scenes—from production to stage management to costume design. The professional journal for **everyone** in theatre.
1 year (12 issues) $5

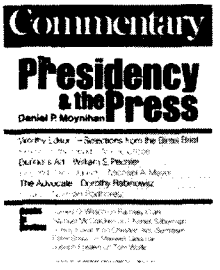


Satire and parody are alive and well in this outrageous, disrespectful, irreverent, scurrilous, insolent, derisive, impudent new humor magazine.
1 year (12 issues) $5.95.

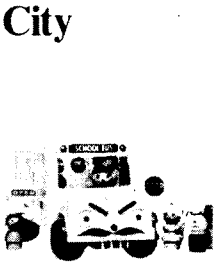
An iconoclastic journal of political and social commentary including book reviews and muckraking articles. Of particular interest to college students.
8 issues $4.88



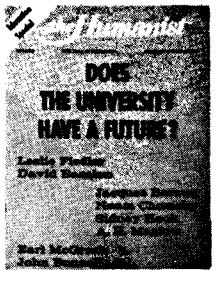
An important new magazine "dedicated to end pollution." Its weapon in the fight to save Earth: a thoughtful, compelling editorial product.
1 year (4 issues) $6.50



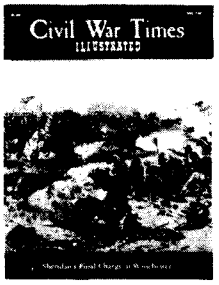
Commentary features articles by prominent authors on social issues, politics, and culture together with reviews and stories.
1 year (12 issues) $10



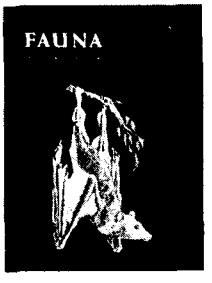
The magazine of urban life and environment. City is edited to serve those who are concerned about, and actively involved in, efforts to solve the nation's critical urban problems.
1 year (6 issues) $10



A journal of ethical concern which serves as a link between theoretical philosophy and applications of humanism to ethical and social problems.
1 year (6 issues) $6



A non-partisan magazine telling the story of the most crucial period in American history with honesty, accuracy, and great readability. Generously illustrated.
***One year (10 issues) $10**



This new magazine of zoology bridges the gap between technical journals and the popularized nature magazines. Full-color photography, superb writing.
***1 year (6 issues) $9**

Just fill in and return the coupon to subscribe to any of these magazines on a guaranteed basis

Some magazines don't try to please everybody. Instead, they try to please people with special interests. Not surprisingly, they're called "special interest" magazines. Whatever your age, occupation, geographical location, hobby, sex, field of study, avocation, pastime, intellectual tastes or religious, political or philosophical persuasion, chances are there's a special interest magazine for you, published by people who share your special interest.

There are over 20,000 special interest publications in the U.S. today. Several of the best are presented here. You may subscribe to any one — or ones — that interest you, under the rates specified, and under this *guarantee:* if you're not entirely satisfied, each publisher guarantees that you may cancel at any time and receive an immediate and unquestioned refund covering the balance of your subscription.

Look over the selections carefully. Isn't there a special interest magazine here that specially interests you? One that you've been meaning to subscribe to? Now's your chance. To order, just fill in the coupon and return it. Send no money — the magazines you choose will bill you.

(Note: You must send payment with your order only on magazines marked *)

ORDER NOW

MSN
Magazine Selection Network
P.O. Box 24C89
Los Angeles, Calif. 90024

Please enter my subscription(s) to the Special Interest magazine(s) indicated below:

- ☐ Psychology Today
- ☐ Vintage
- ☐ Evergreen
- ☐ The New Republic
- ☐ Quinto Lingo
- ☐ Daedalus
- ☐ Theatre Crafts
- ☐ National Lampoon
- ☐ Ramparts
- ☐ Environmental Quality
- ☐ Commentary
- ☐ City
- *☐ The Humanist
- *☐ Civil War Times Illustrated
- *☐ Fauna

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Fill in coupon, clip it out and return it — with your check or money order if necessary — to the address above. A

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WINSTON'S DOWN HOME TASTE!

© 1971 R.J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO COMPANY, WINSTON-SALEM, N.C.

20 mg. "tar", 1.3 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report NOV.'70.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Custom and Costume

A Story

Alan Goldfein

I AM a professor of Jewish Studies at a very respectable American university. So it is not unusual that I found myself at a certain stage in my life becoming more and more intrigued (obsessed, I might say; compelled is, perhaps, too strong; yet it is a correct description for the feelings that swayed me some of the time) with an interesting possibility. The more intrigued I became, that is to say obsessed, or compelled, the more the possibility magnified itself into the grander proportions of probability. However, the only way in which a probability can be reduced (or enlarged, depending upon one's point of view) to a certainty, is by proof. And therefore it was in search of the evidence I needed that I took leave from my duties at the university and flew to Israel.

I knew that Israelis dressed in a very casual fashion. That members of the Knesset—or parliament—often found an open-necked sports shirt and slacks sufficient clothing in which to carry on the affairs of government. I recognized the leveling and liberating nature of this behavior. And, while I was quite aware that climate had not a little to do with it, this realization could not prevent me from experiencing a great admiration toward the people of Israel. Too long, it had been my feeling, had Jews been unable to wear garments of the soil. Their dress had not fit their habitude. Nor, unfortunately, had they wanted it to. It is, of course, no accident (if I may be permitted a slight bit of pedantry) that the word habit refers to both costume and custom. It is natural that the two should match. Yet, this was an interrelationship that Jews in the past had not had.

I do not mean by the aforementioned to plead a people's cause, or to lament their past. I only mention it for one reason. Perhaps two. The second—and I hope the one of lesser importance—is that I am an academician, and a historian at that; or a scholar, if I may be permitted to say so myself. Which means that I have been conditioned for many years to think in terms of antecedents, consequences, conditions, and implications. I think often in origins and developments. That is, to make a pun, my habit. I cannot quit so easily. My habit also is always to wear a suit, and usually a dark one. This mode of dress is appropriate to my calling. So, there again, costume and custom. Which relates to the important reason why I even bother to bring up the subject of dress. Simply, I wanted to blend in. I wanted to appear, at least outwardly, like a typical Israeli. Why I felt this deception (as some might call it) was necessary, should become evident later.

Since I arrived at Lod airport with the intention of presenting the appearance of any Israeli, there was no need for me to bring my American suits, shirts, and ties along. I would purchase what I needed in Tel Aviv. Consequently, aside from underwear and handkerchiefs and personal accessories, my suitcase was packed with manuscripts. These manuscripts were in the nature of diaries, autobiographies, clippings of articles from American-Jewish newspapers, and notes I had taken during interviews, which some distinguished American-Jewish psychoanalysts had been kind enough to grant me. Each source touched on a similar very strange phenomenon. Some, to be sure, were questionable. Some unreliable. Some, to say the least, highly suspect. Some dealt with the subject in great depth. Some, indeed, could scarcely direct their attention away from it. They were—and I do not, by any means, use the word lightly—*haunted*. Still, others only mentioned it in the most perfunctory way. Nonetheless, each document, in its own way and from a unique perspective, cast some light on the same mysterious problem.

It was, as a matter of fact, as I stepped my feet down for the first time on Israeli soil, that I could add my own, non-academic, non-objective experience to the data already assembled in my suitcase. It was the end of March; the last day, in fact; and the first day of Passover. (This was in 1969.) I recall that there was a delicious flavor threading the air. I am an ignoramus when it comes to botany (spending so much time, as I do, in my office and classroom). Yet I knew that this redolence was of honeysuckle; for it reminded me of my youth. I was born in Vilna in a time when even the city could be considered a suburb, in that it had a rural quality. One felt, even when

ALAN GOLDFEIN taught until recently in the department of history at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh. This is his first published story.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in the heart of the city, that one was still surrounded by countryside. One could breathe in nature through his lungs. It was the air of a pre-industrial world. (I am aware, of course, that Israel is not an underdeveloped country, that it has factories and a highly skilled technological elite. The air that surrounds Lod airport was, nonetheless, pre-industrial.)

The scent of the air, perhaps, made me feel as a child. But I am sure that it does not explain the sensation I am about to report. As I have mentioned, this was Passover. So the airport and its grounds were filled with thousands of people. There were crowds of Israelis who had come to meet their relatives from the Diaspora, especially America. There were brothers screaming for brothers; sons shouting for fathers, and vice versa; grandparents embracing their children's children for the first time. It was an international family homecoming; a reunion that in many cases must have spanned the chasm of a three-generation separation. A meeting of—at least in my experience—unprecedented proportions. Its enormity has even caused me to have a recurrent dream. A very symbolic one. I see half-people approaching one another. A man without arms, but with powerful legs and a generous, blushing, full face rushes toward the open arms of a pale, sad-faced man in a wheelchair. There are other unions as well, some sadder, more pathetic; many more that are joyous and inspiring. But, being a scholar, a man who proceeds on facts (even today), I am not inclined toward or talented in describing affairs mystically, or supernaturally. So I will describe no more. The closest I will come is to say that custom and costume were reuniting. Mystical sociology at best. Yet, there was a moment at Lod; more real than, yet unreal as, my dream—it was very brief; instantaneous—where everywhere I looked the people embracing looked alike. The resemblances seemed perfect. When the age difference was immense, as with grandparents and their grandchildren, the child would appear to me as a perfect representation of how the old person would have looked in his European youth, in the old country. Astounding. And many of the people holding each other were most certainly not even related. My data were now no longer only in my suitcase. They had extended to my brain.

But I was fatigued. It had been an extremely long flight. Perhaps—and I recall my reservations—these were merely altered images. Perhaps they represented a false creation of wish fulfillment on my part. I wondered whether I had not come under the spell which is an occupational hazard in my line of work; a force which has corrupted many good minds: that of being moved. Being moved away from dead center by the accounts of witnesses. Was I taking sides? Was I being transformed by the evidence? My images, I cautioned myself, might certainly be a creative way for my subconscious to be saying that a Jew was a Jew, ultimately, despite the heterogeneous history of nations. Until that moment, I had not been aware that a very substantial and influential part of me desired the accounts to be true. Altered images, in any case, I consoled myself, were more philosophical and real than hallucinations. The existential, or metaphysical, is always a welcome relief from the psychological. Even at the very least, I could satisfy myself that I remained sane and healthy.

HYMAN SAY swore he saw neither an image nor an hallucination. I will let him speak for himself:

> . . . "*Rega, rega* [Wait, wait]!" the man called. The word was not familiar, nor the tone, which was a high-pitched mixture of order and plea. Yet I felt as though I had heard this man speaking before. Somewhere, sometime in my life. As I turned there was no longer anyone screaming. So I had no way of knowing who it had been from among the hundreds of people walking and running in the street. Most likely he had boarded the bus.
>
> Two days later, the same voice wept. "For this I came here. For this. All the way. All the waiting. All the money. All I lost. . . . For this!" Then he looked at me. Directly up at me. My head held itself rigid, as though it was clamped tightly within a vise. "Where are my children?" he cried. To me! To me? His lament and his question were in Yiddish. His clothing was torn and very old and ill-fitting. It seemed as though he had worn them since the day of his immigration. He was curled up in the middle of Jaffa Street. His blood was on his wretched clothes, and on the fender of the car which had struck him. He moved his lips, but I heard nothing. I bent closer. Down to him. He reached up and grabbed at my lapels, trying to pull himself to me; or to bring us together. He was ME! He was ME! The clothes and the dirt and the blood and the language did not matter. He was ME! How could I be mistaken? We were face to face in those moments that extinguished rapidly with his death.

Mr. Say tells us in the next paragraph that the man had no identification on his person, and that no one—neither friends nor relations—claimed his body. It was Mr. Say who paid for the man's funeral.

Hyman Say was a wealthy American furrier (Say & Co. of New York) and a noted philanthropist. (He is the Say of the famous Say Library at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.) His story must therefore be given a great deal of credence. Mr. Say died in 1967. The foregoing account is taken from his autobiography, *Mr. Chinchilla* (p. 182).

Dr. Irving Kahnweiler, the respected psychoanalyst and author (*Proust: Marcel or Moishe? Heine: Heinrich or Haym?*) and, above all, my dear friend, considers Mr. Say's experience in a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

clinical light. In the concentration camps, the furrier had lost, among other members of his family, an older brother named Willy. As a child in Warsaw, Hyman had looked up to Willy. He had attempted to emulate him. But, as always, this was impossible. For where Willy was powerfully built and athletically inclined, Hyman was frail. While Willy was extroverted, Hyman was retiring. And where Willy was a promising Talmudic student, Hyman had set assimilation as his goal; perhaps as compensation for the inadequacies he felt in all the other areas. This was why, when the opportunity presented itself, Hyman emigrated to America, where, it was reported, acculturation to a relatively traditionless society could more easily be accomplished. Perhaps, also, Hyman wished to escape a daily life in which he constantly walked around in his brother's shadow (see *Mr. Chinchilla,* pp. 22-37).

Irving feels, therefore, that as the younger brother became more and more a success in this country, achieving his original goals, he grew more and more guilty about abandoning his brother and his background which he both loved and hated. Perhaps, as Irving notes ("Schizophrenia as Visual Time Preference," *Journal of Popular Psychopathology,* XXVI, 6/65, pp. 102-13), the man who was run down in the Jerusalem street did possess some quality, some characteristic, vocal or otherwise, which reminded Hyman Say of his dead brother. Perhaps it was merely that the other man was dying. At any rate, the psychological effect of being in Israel, the new homeland, and of being painfully implored by the bloodied man as he died, triggered a temporary, though acute, schizoid delusion.

Though my interpretation was guided by Irving's at one time, I now disagree. Mr. Say himself decided that the dying man, purely and simply, resembled him. No more, no less. This opinion was doubtless based upon a recollected confrontation, however; upon a memory tranquilized by the distance of a decade. Yet the philanthropist obviously considered the affair significant enough to merit telling in his life story. One wonders.

As I have said, however, in the beginning I was inclined to go along with Irving. My studies of Jewish and German literature, and of Heinrich Heine particularly (who suffered in a tug-of-war between the two throughout his life), has taught me that the image of the double—or *Doppelgänger*—was not an uncommon theme. Nor was it unique in mythology. The Jews of Northern Europe had for centuries told myths of the *Golem,* who could be created by a Wonder Rabbi in the image which the creator wished (which was often his own). But this was literature and folklore. And though in many ways the two are mirrors of society as it exists, they are translucent and refracting ones. They do not reflect the actual world. Hyman Say had *seen* his double. And I, personally, had seen hundreds. Hyperbolic anticipation? After all, I had not viewed my own.

I WALKED along the boulevards of downtown Tel Aviv. Ben Yehuda Street has outdoor cafés and expensive clothing stores. Allenby Street too. It has hippies, who look exactly like the long-haired students I often teach. (I would not, certainly, consider this as *Doppelgänger* evidence, except of course sociologically.) The city has soldiers. Very young ones. They are everywhere. There are uncountable old people too. The sea front has enormous white, glass, sand- and sea-glazed hotels. It is in stretches like Miami on the Mediterranean. I saw the photograph, enlarged, plastered on a granite wall, of a famous general. The man is a hero, and the sight of his face called back to my mind the amazing experiences of Leonard Feldgott. (For obvious reasons, this is a pseudonym.) Leonard was—and remains, I presume—a patient of my friend Kahnweiler. He visited Israel in January of 1957, shortly after the '56 conflict. Leonard had been a counterman in a highly successful Jewish delicatessen in Baltimore for most of his life. He was unmarried, and consequently had been able to save a fairly large sum of money over the years; even from his modest salary. At that time he was fifty years old. He was a shy man, but he was also a person who liked people. He had always been a great lover of sports; especially of boxing, horse-racing, and baseball. Leonard was, on his first day in Tel Aviv, walking along a major street when he was suddenly approached and surrounded by a crowd of boisterous teen-agers. He was, he told Kahnweiler, scared to death. He feared that he had done something wrong. Or that these young men were Arabs. He would have run, but there was no break in the group through which to dart. He shook, and awaited a beating. Then he realized, despite the barrier of language, that he was being cheered. When he could not sign their little books in the way they evidently wished, they left him. But, even so, they were not angry. Time and again, Leonard was involved in similar confrontations. Even his hotel-keeper looked strangely reverent toward the delicatessen counterman. Hundreds of people, every day, mistook Leonard Feldgott for Yoram Barnea, a national hero of the Sinai campaign. Leonard was forced, even, to purchase sunglasses for privacy. But basically he loved being famous, even though his fame was an unearned one. Even though he was a counterfeit hero. Even though the adulation of the masses was misdirected. Leonard told Irving Kahnweiler that he had wanted to spend the remainder of his life in Israel. Where he was a personality. But time continued, and his stockpile of money dissolved, and there were few jobs available for a man who could not learn Hebrew. He simply could not, maybe because of his age, master the language. There was, he admitted,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

some work available like being a counterman. However, a national hero could not be seen cutting meat with a filthy apron for a uniform. So Leonard returned to America, where he now dreams, in his sleep, that he is a general. But, perhaps because of the language, and perhaps because he is an American, the war in which he fights, and the victories he wins, are in Vietnam . . . not Golan, not Sinai. Leonard's parents were born in Odessa. General Barnea's family has its origins there too. Leonard is very unhappy.

A WEEK of investigations, of genealogies, turned up some clues and curiosities, but nothing nearly conclusive. A golden *menorah*—given by a Haifa stevedore (he attested to this when I interviewed him) to his less muscular double, a realtor from Shaker Heights, Ohio—proved to have been fabricated in Yemen, of all places; not Lodz, where the mystery surrounding the ancestry of both men appeared at first to have originated. . . . An old man whose eyelids fluttered, and who operated a kiosk in Tiberias, swore he had seen thousands of doubles. He was quick to confirm my every speculation and intimation. He more laughed than spoke his stories. He rocked his head up and down as rapidly as his lids quivered, laughing *"Ken, ken* [yes, yes]," at every perfect pair I mentioned. He could not be halted. With his tangled chattering he tied me to him, as if with a strong, tight rope. But he was "the madman of Galilee" to everyone who knew him. . . . The great-grandfather of Tami Ilsar, a beautiful social worker from Jerusalem, had the same last name—Blumenthal—as the great-grandfather of Roni Schwartz, an equally beautiful social worker from Pittsburgh. Further investigation, however, showed that one Blumenthal had been a Frankfurter, and the other had lived in Dessau. Beyond that it was impossible to trace. So, the two girls may well be distant relatives. But it is more likely that they are not. . . . I was thinking of the nineteen-year-old Richard Schoenbaum, a conscientious-objector emigré from America, and what he called its "imperialist mentality," who had met an Israeli man in uniform—a man of nineteen—on the dangerous road to Eilat. Richard had been carrying a backpack and a copy of Alan Watts's *The Book*. The soldier, who was Richard in features, was carrying a knapsack and an *Uzzi* submachine gun. They had talked, but their minds were too far apart to meet. The soldier, Yigal, was now dead. Richard was back in America. I was thinking of Richard and Yigal, and the others at dusk at the Wailing Wall. I was not unhappy; I was not remorseful. There was at least the fruit of sentimentality and nostalgia and sympathy hiding inside my failure to redeem the past. I felt as though, like the Wall, there was a partially visible monument, or remnant, in existence near me. And though it was untraceable and untouchable, the fact that I *believed* that it was there gave me a secure feeling.

II

TWO securities. There was the sense—I admit vicarious and artificial—of being a pioneer. My clothing was Israeli; its incidental nature had allowed me to question people at their ease; and it also made me feel rugged. The top two buttons of my shirt were undone. I could be Ben-Gurion if I were older. My chest was stung by the surprising sharpness of a faint wind in the air. A wind that I knew had formed a long time ago near Carthage, and had caused men to create images to represent it; to describe its personality; the miracles it performed; the disasters it had caused; from its origins to Babylon. And now, from those regions near Tangier to beyond Teheran, I imagined, it was still trailing. A wind of the ancient past that had never stopped. It produced what seemed like sparks where my open shirt allowed it to touch me. I was not what I usually was. Europe was distant. America did not exist. I felt superior to the hatted, capped, and caftaned Jews praying at the Wall. They were a European sidetrack. Perhaps a derailment. In that moment I felt each of them to be a distortion.

The leader of the distortions, however, had my face. When he turned I saw that. He was bearded, had earlocks, a fur hat, and a long black coat; but his face, plainly, was mine. It was as if he had turned for only one reason: to humble me from my delusions of grandeur; from my identification with a monumental and infinite wind. For as soon as I had made the recognition, he faced the Wall again and continued his swaying and his praying. And I was left, dumbfounded, to stare at the rocking of his back.

Understandably, I forgot myself and the sacred character of my location, and I ran to him. I grabbed him and wheeled him around. His coal eyes frightened me. They were like mine. But deeper and steadier and stronger; if only because the total blackness of his wardrobe supported them. (Kahnweiler says, in my subconscious, the heavy black clothes became the source of the essence of his eyes. Much as the ocean may be the source of a lake, or bay, or river.) He said *"Mah* [What]?", somewhat disturbed, but not perplexed, as I certainly would have been if the circumstances had been reversed. (As, of course, they were; though they were not.) But before I could compose myself enough to be able to say a word, my arms were yanked behind me and pinned firmly together. And, freed from me, he departed, followed by about thirty Hasidim. When he was safely away, the two disciples released me. I was frustrated and confused, but not angry. I should have known better. I had violated the sanctity of a shrine. I was lucky I had not been stoned. (These people had certainly been

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

known to do that.) So, not surprisingly, the disciples refused to enlighten me as to the identity of their master.

Nonetheless, it was only the next day that I heard my voice singing. (I am not a singer. As a child I vocalized often, both popular songs and Yiddish melodies. But when the time for my Bar Mitzvah drew near, the cantor of our synagogue had advised my parents and myself that my vocal cords were not properly suited for that beautiful activity. It would be better, he suggested, if I recited—as a lecture, as a reading—my portion of the Sabbath Torah. I did so. No one was disappointed. Nor, I cannot forget, was anyone moved—excepting my parents. I have not sung since. I dream of it often, however.) My voice cried, and it was answered by a congregation of cries. It was a reaching voice. It reached me nearly a kilometer away. It searched up high. It repeated itself. It came down to earth. It was joined by its followers. It pleaded and it laughed. It seemed to do everything. There was no form nor predictability to it. It even talked softly, as in the harmonies one croons to a child, or chants, even lower, in a playful mumble to a loved animal. It was more moving than any singing I have ever heard.

Do not imagine that this was a mystic experience on my part. It simply was not. I heard the *Zaddik*'s* voice because I was within its range. I had come to Mea Shearim—the Hasidic community—to find him. He and his people were praying; and I heard them. No. It was not mystic. Yet, how could a voice which I recognized as my own unmelodious one make words climb into music; into music that was exaltation? I thought of that; though I thought little. The circumstances that prevented reason from working should be plain enough.

The voices belonged to the Vilna *Rav*,† Jacob Zalmon, and his followers. They continued even as I entered the main room of their house. This area was not very large, and it was poorly furnished. There was only a long wooden table, surrounded by a large assortment of both wood and metal chairs; no two of them matching. Most of the metal chairs were green, and they were marred by scratches. The table and the other chairs had surfaces like a battlefield. They were scuffed and scraped and pocked with craters and deep ridges. On the floor lay an Oriental rug which had been worn down to thin shreds. It was not a delicate room. It seemed to be at once prayer room, dining room, dance hall, and nursery for little children. I say this because each activity which in our own world has a specific time and/or place was proceeding here in the midst of each of the others. So that one could not legitimately state with precision what the major and defining function was. If indeed there was one. (For further information on this state of affairs, as it relates to the Hasidic personality in general, see my article, "Hasidism, Gestalt Psychology, and the Sociology of Knowledge," *Judean Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 41, pp. 206-22.) Babies and children sat and giggled and cried and played with toys, while women, whom I barely saw, tended to them, and as swiftly, disappeared; reappearing when they felt they were needed. Fully-bearded men prayed as much with their feet and their arms and hands, and their hips and shoulders, as with their mouths. There was nothing they did not put into their prayers. Like the children, they had every variety of expression on their faces. Some wept, torrentially I might add, while others were having a wonderful time of it. Some among them—the less coordinated, or the more entranced—stumbled (no wonder the condition of the carpet). Food was being set out by the quickly materializing and vanishing women. All this simultaneously. It was chaotic. My presence, the intrusion of an outsider, in non-religious (sacrilegious to them) clothes, did not seem to affect them. What difference could I make, what threat could my modernity pose, to the devotion and joy of these people, these Jews, like me, but yet dressed in clothing of more than two hundred years past, their ways originating in an environment that had existed beyond the reaches of the farthest outposts of the civilized world? (This is, of course, hyperbole; but it illustrates that blend of admiration and alienation that I felt.) They were indifferent to me. Were they not shocked that I had the same physical countenance as their adored master? No. Nor was Jacob Zalmon at all surprised. When the agitation and dancing had settled and dinner had begun, I had my chance to talk to this *Zaddik*, who was my double. He had just completed the symbolic act whereby he tasted a portion of each of his people's food. (See my article, p. 217; this practice is called *shirayim*. Intellectually, as you can see, I was no naive stranger to this world.) Then he nodded his approval for everyone to eat. What morsels the *Rav* had taken to his lips they seized and devoured zealously. As though they had been starved for this very occasion. Those bits and pieces, those scraps of *matzos* and fibers of meat and fish were obviously holy.

"So, you are here," he said to me. He was grinning. His attitude I would call one of patriarchal amusement. Splinters of *matzos* decorated his beard. "So tell me something," he seemed to say.

I managed to tell him my name and my purpose. He took these in stride; matter-of-factly. To *Rav* Jacob Zalmon this encounter was neither fantastic nor fearsome; nor did it require an explanation. It was almost, I might say, expected.

I learned that the *Zaddik*, like me, had been

*A *Hasidic rabbi. Literally "the just," or "true believer."*

† Master, teacher. One may be a *Zaddik* and not a *Rav*. Jacob Zalmon, however, was both.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

born in Vilna. What else he told me is open to interpretation. It is in the form of parables. I repeat them here, almost word-for-word; for they are difficult to forget:

A man of middle age had walked since the day of his birth with a pronounced and pathetic limp. All his life this infirmity had prevented his performance of endeavors that engaged others naturally. He was a lonely man. Each morning and evening he wished in his prayers for a relief from his isolation. In the morning, since the day, with all its activity, was beginning, he prayed that his leg would cease to be crippled; that it would become normal and healthy. And in the evening, a time when daily chores are done and one's attention turns to philosophy, the unfortunate wished for a better state of mind, so that he might adjust to his condition, and accept it as part of his life.

One day a miracle-working *Zaddik* arrived at this suffering man's village. The man came to the inn where the *Rav* rested, and pleaded that he might be cured. The Rabbi assented. However, he advised the cripple that he must make a choice as to the direction the miracle would work; the active morning road or the serene way of the evening.

In short, the man could not decide. All his life he had prayed both ways; and so he was attached in his heart to both cures. He could relinquish neither the one nor the other. Thus, the *Zaddik* was compelled to touch the man on his leg, on his head, and by his heart, thereby granting both desires.

A double, or twofold blessing; or a curse? For now, instead of one man with an unhealthy body *and* an unhealthy mind, the man was two. One was hearty in physical attributes and the other was content in his mentality. But how was the latter contented? He was adjusted and accepting of a bad leg he no longer possessed. His peace of mind was wasted. And at the same time it did not even exist. His contentment and the subject of his contentment could no longer live together.

* * *

In the age of Adam there thrived a beautiful animal, called a *Kolail.** It was swift and graceful and immaculately clean, like a cat. But it was also friendly and benevolent and loving to others, like a dog. With the passing of millennia the growing pains of the Earth caused the land upon which this exquisite creature lived to give way, scattering trees and grass and mountains and *Kolailim* to distant resting places. In the West, the terrain was rugged and unyielding, so the *Kolailim* who settled there adapted to it by relying on their swiftness and talents for independence. They became cats. In the East, the land was fertile and abundant, and this allowed community and sharing. The Eastern *Kolail* lived only on their doglike qualities. And, over the millennia, they did, indeed become dogs.

Yet, though ages and distances and changes of the body and the habits came between them, at night, cats dreamed always of dogs. And always the dogs represented their finest ideals. They longed, in their sleep, to be like dogs. And so, as often happens, since these were not humans, but animals, the cats eventually began to bow down and pray to the image of dogs. In their language, the word for dog grew to become the symbol of God.

And for the dogs, in their own world, the same occurred. Cats were the dreamed objects of worship. [There was a pause here.]

My friend [this was the only time during the story that the *Zaddik* addressed me], do you know how dogs and cats behave toward each other today?

* * *

A very robust and powerful man had never had his own house in which to live. He traveled all his life. From Mezritch to Lublin to Vilna to Berditchev to Zlotchev he wandered; sometimes up and back; sometimes criss-crossing; sometimes without purpose. He learned through his journeys how to survive from the land; from the beneficence of nature. Yet, though he was a capable master at what he did, he despised it. He would wish one day for a large and beautiful house—it would have to be large, since he was so large, and since he was such a roamer—and he longed for a wife and children. But other days, especially when it was spring, and the foliage weaved brilliantly in the radiance of the sun, he would wish it could be like that always, and that he could accept his homeless fate.

When he met his *Zaddik*, like the cripple, he could not choose between his two desires. What was the result? The man received the bounty of a wonderful mansion, a wife and two sons, and the unconquerable urge to migrate like the seasons. He never occupied his mansion, never touched his wife, never saw his sons; though he longed for them every moment of his "contented" journeys.

Rav Jacob Zalmon told me these allegorical tales in the order in which I report them here. (The reader will note, undoubtedly, the similarity between the first and the last. It must have been the *Rav*'s intention that the third would take on added meaning through the intervening parable. Perhaps not too unlike the approach spelling-bee competitors often use: pronouncing the word, spelling it out, and then repronouncing it.) Upon completing the last parable he abruptly terminated our interview. And, over my understandably weak and confused protestations, I was dismissed. I have never been able to see the Vilna *Zaddik* or his disciples again. One week after the meeting recounted here, I returned to their synagogue. But it was vacant. I was told by a neighbor that the entire community had transplanted itself to a *moshav*, a cooperative agricul-

* I have checked and rechecked. I have consulted experts. No such animal is mentioned in the Bible. Nor is it to be found in Sir James Frazer's comprehensive work, *The Golden Bough*; nor is it in Eliade, nor anywhere else.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tural community, in the hills south of Lebanon. No such *moshav* exists.

IRVING KAHNWEILER believes psychology has the answers. He has explained to me that I (like Leonard Feldgott, and Richard Schoenbaum, and the others) was experiencing the present through my eyes of the past. That I was taking episodes from earlier years in my life and superimposing them on the world at hand. I saw a Hasidic rabbi; I was impressed by his devotion, his spontaneity, his mastery; I wanted to be like him. So I made of him the person whom I had first emulated as a child. I transformed him into my father. To the argument, why did I not then give Jacob Zalmon my father's face, instead of my own, Irving presents a facile (I think) reply. He says that I (and Leonard and Richard and the rest) *do* see myself as my father; or, at any rate, that I *want to*. The remainder of his answer, anyone with even the rudiments of logic can deduce. Irving does have trouble with the fact that this phenomenon appears to happen solely in Israel. For a solution he resorts to linguistics (for the identity of Fatherland and father) and to the later adventures of Freud into the anthropology of universal guilt (*Moses and Monotheism, Civilization and Its Discontents, Totem and Taboo*). He invents empty phrases and fills them with important sounds. Irving uncovers "The Praxis of the Expectation of Difference and the Assumption of Identity" (in *Psychiatry and Jewish Identity*, P. Mandelkron, ed).* Irving ceases to be a psychoanalyst, and becomes (I am sorry) a dilettante. I will not bother anyone with further details. As far as I am concerned, Irving is pulling rabbits out of hats.

SOMETIMES, when I am bent over my papers (on Heine) in the library, a scene snaps into focus between my eyes and my research. Its duration is no more than one or two frames of a cinematic film. But it is long and dramatic enough to leave me with the distinct impression that the daily world in which I work and contemplate is a partial shell. And that I am concurrently existing in another place as well. The sight which cracks the shell is of myself, as Jacob Zalmon, leading an ecstatic Hasidic congregation in prayer. It is a wonderful feeling. I sometimes feel that I am living for it.

Once, I saw my *Zaddik* self at a moment when he was seeing me. Like facing mirrors, it was endless. For he was watching me observing him, who was watching me, and on and on. That was frightening. It brought me the kind of panic that must only accompany the most infinitesimal of openings into the infinite. A vertiginous nausea overcame me.

I suppose it is when I reflect on that double-faced encounter that I become somewhat insecure, and wonder if, perhaps, Irving is right. Except in reverse. Perhaps, I think, I am a creation projected out from *Rav* Jacob Zalmon's "hallucinations," from *his* guilt.

Sometimes these thoughts make me very lonely. They sometimes give me the feeling of isolation, of unattachment; even of sterility. They take my Jewishness away (for it suffers by comparison with Jacob Zalmon's). Yet, there is even a reward in this. For all of these experiences help me with my perspective and penetration as a scholar. I am intimate with the *Golem* and the *Doppelgänger*. I understand Heinrich Heine. I can touch them from inside.

P.S. In his recently completed doctoral dissertation (*Quantifications and Structuralizations of Cultural Genealogies* [unpublished, but soon to be, under the title *Traditions and Turnings*]), Tahir Edib has noted an interesting occurrence: Jay Goldenhoof, an American of Indian ancestry and a committed Maoist expatriate, swears he met one Tosun Busbecq in a village in Manchuria (its name escapes me). Tosun was a journalist from Istanbul and a loyal Demokrat of the Atatürk persuasion. The two men were identical doubles. American Indians and Seljuk Turks are assumed by anthropologists to have a common racial origin in Central Eastern Asia. They are both Ural-Altaic peoples.

Professor Edib's discovery is now leading me toward a theory of universality.

* Basically his argument (as best I understand it) runs as follows: Jews, unlike other ethnic groups in America, have found it impossible to identify with the people and culture of any particular foreign country (as Italians or Irish or Russian Americans, for example, are able to do). They do, certainly, identify as Jews; but, says Irving, this is too abstract a category and condition—despite Hebrew and the Talmudic tradition—since it has not been rooted (until recently) anywhere—to allow a full emotional commitment. Language and habit (custom and costume) have functioned as barriers to true cross-national identities and authentic senses of destiny. Thus, with the founding of Israel, an actual national home, the Diaspora Jew (and American in particular) has found it difficult to experience the Israel within him in the way that an Italo-American feels the Italy within him. The Jew from the United States is therefore subject to an identity crisis and its concomitant guilt. He finds himself overly patriotic toward Israel, while not feeling himself an extension of it (or a generation from it). His patriotism therefore becomes overcompensation. Consequently, when this Jew finds himself on Israeli soil, he is shocked (so strongly that he does not even realize it) by how much the people resemble him and his parents in the attributes of nation; in manner and aspect. And this shock produces the "hallucination" of the double.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Literature and Crisis

Robert Alter

The unity of any event and the integrity of the world are guaranteed merely by enigmatic, although visible, symbols, which are necessary because without them the visible world would fall asunder into unnameable, bodiless, dry layers of cold and transparent ash.

—Hermann Broch, *The Sleepwalkers*

CHILDREN of a dark century, we tend to look into our literature as in a glass darkly. The glass itself, in our most recurrent images of it, is thought of as cracked and splintered and skewed so that through its own violent fashioning it may mirror more faithfully the twisted confusion of faces that modern reality has assumed. If we ask ourselves how writers have been able to go on making poems and plays and novels while mankind runs amok, irresistibly bent, it often seems, on the simultaneous destruction of its own past and its own future, our most common answer is that literature has served as a uniquely sensitive seismograph of the age's disasters, or, indeed, as a warning-system for disasters still to come. There is of course much justice in this answer and it could hardly be otherwise: unless literature were no more than an escape from reality into self-caressing fantasy, it would somehow have to body forth the historical darkness through which we all grope. But if, as Saul Bellow was arguing persuasively not long ago, the apocalyptic stance among writers has declined through constant repetition into an empty gesture of piety, one may also wonder whether criticism itself has not perpetuated a similar cliché on the level of interpretation in so often describing the role of the modern writer as a conjurer with apocalypses. For well over half a century, poets and novelists have conspicuously used the resources of their art to lay bare the death's-heads and dry-rot of a crumbling world, but there also persists among them a powerful impulse simply to make beautiful things, even in the valley of the shadow of apocalypse, and the nature of that impulse deserves some reflection.

If much of the major literature of our century has turned upon some historical or moral abyss, it is also true that literature in this period has been turned in upon itself to an unprecedented degree. *The Trial, Women in Love,* and *The Sound and the Fury* are, of course, exemplary works of the years of deepening inner trouble that followed World War I, but just as exemplary, in a very different way, are Valéry's *Le Cimetière marin,* Wallace Stevens's *Harmonium,* Joyce's *Ulysses*; and the Thomas Mann who wrote *The Magic Mountain* in these years would also work, both early and late in his career, on *Felix Krull,* a radiant portrait of the artist as protean master of experience. Mann's example should suggest that the impulse to look into the depths has often been intertwined with the impulse of the artist to reflect on the processes of making art. Proust's patient evocation of the growth of an artist's consciousness through time concludes with a whole cultural order in ruins and the reverberation of German bombs in the salons of the Faubourg Saint-Germain. Conversely, Sartre's *Nausea,* which begins with a traumatic exposure of its protagonist to the formless abyss of the absurd, ends on a resolution to transcend meaningless existence by, of all things, writing a novel.

There are, to be sure, certain escapist or elitist tendencies in this recurrent preoccupation of modern writers with art as the subject of art. To cite a relatively recent example, the French New Novel of the 50's and early 60's, for all the insistence of its manifestoes that it sought to confront a world stripped of predetermined value, represented a retreat of the imagination from history after four decades of historical trauma, and thus reduced the novel to a laboratory of narrative technique. Elsewhere, however, literary art has often been driven to reflect on itself out of the deepest inner necessity, recapitulating its own past through complex strategies of allusion, imitation, and parody; brooding over its own nature and ends; exploring its connections with all that is not art—in order to make literature still possible in a world that threatens to overwhelm it, and through the assertion of literature's prerogatives to keep alive as well the idea of a more humanly livable world.

THE two major works of Hermann Broch offer an instructive paradigm of this dialectical relationship between the literary consciousness of history and the literary consciousness of art. His trilogy, *The Sleepwalkers,* written in Austria on the eve of Hitler's ascent to power, moves step by careful

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

step, from 1888 to 1918, toward what Broch himself calls the "disintegration of values" of European civilization. The darkening historical landscape is appropriately reflected in the shifts of narrative texture from one part of the novel to the next. The poignant muted lyricism of the 1888 section gives way in the middle volume, set in 1903, to a harsher satirical mode of representation in which a discursively meditative narrator views the sexual and commercial shenanigans of the characters as despairing acts of creatures hungering for an unattainable salvation. The last volume, set in the closing months of World War I, is deliberately disjointed, moving back and forth nervously among different, barely related stories, interweaving verse-narrative with the prose, interpolating chapters of a historical-philosophical essay on the decay of European values in the modern age. It is Broch's contention here that with the breakdown of an overarching system of value, competing "partial systems," representing different techniques, interests, spheres of life, tend to absolutize their own values and thus to translate destructive unreason into social and political action on an unprecedented scale. "There arises a specific commercial kind of thinking, or a specific military kind of thinking, each of which strives toward ruthless and consistent absoluteness, each of which constructs a deductive *schema* of plausibility to suit itself, each of which has its 'theology' or its 'private theology.'" Forty years after the writing of these words, they seem at least one likely way of explaining the various kinds of mentality that could invent a Final Solution, a global strategy of overkill, and "plausible" scenarios for the pacification of Southeast Asia. Yet the very sharpness of Broch's analysis has the effect of cutting the ground from under him as a novelist. Like most ambitious writers, Broch clearly wants to make literature work as an art of the whole—pulling all characters and events into an orchestrated system of values, seeing individual lives and life at large in a unified field of vision. But how can an art of the whole function among the broken pieces of an age of partial systems? Not at all, one is led to infer from the end of *The Sleepwalkers,* where the novel, caught in the toils of imitative form, seems to confess the inability of the literary imagination to produce coherence in an incoherent world.

I HAVE underscored the predicament of the novel-form implicit in *The Sleepwalkers* because it helps make clear why Broch's later work, *The Death of Virgil,* is both a logical development in his own career and, for all its seeming peculiarity, part of an important current in 20th-century literature. Viewed superficially, the writing of such a book looks like an act of mere withdrawal: a major European novelist, in exile in America, at the very moment when his native continent is in flames, turns his back on two thousand years of history to recreate in an elaborate poetic novel the death of a Roman poet. Obviously, there are many ways of talking about so anomalous a book: as the longest lyric poem in the German language, as the closest approximation in fiction to the formal effects of music, or—in connection with the predicament of the novel raised by *The Sleepwalkers*—as a threatened literary art undertaking a sweeping review of its own resources and limits, of its own ontological grounds. The choice of the historical setting, then, is doubly apt, because it allows the writer to focus on an archetype of the European poet with an intense introspective purity, and because the whole novel thus implies the relationship between the act of writing and the cultural past that is so central to the problematics of literature in an age of disintegrating values. Broch is careful not to project too crudely the troubles of his own time onto Virgil's, but, like Yeats, he thinks of history as a series of two-thousand-year cycles, and so can see a structural correspondence between Virgil's age and ours as periods of critical transition. Accordingly, he suggests that already for Virgil poetic invention had become a self-conscious, self-skeptical act; that the Latin poet was already isolated from the people, the people itself become a potentially anarchic mob; that great political forces were changing the face of the known world and making imperious demands on the writer to be their voice. "Oh, Augustus," Virgil calls out at one point in his long colloquy with the emperor, "the ground is shaking . . . nothing shook for Homer or his heroes."

What is perhaps most impressive about Broch's oceanic meditation on poetry is the way it avoids easy resolutions, swinging back and forth in great dialectic movements between doubt and affirmation. The dying Virgil knows how the calling of poetry has kept him apart from other men, always self-bent on the fashioning of his own edifice of fame, but as an artist he will not relinquish the idea of "an affiliation with the human community, which was the aim of real art in its aspiration toward humanity," and his own luminous poetic consciousness in the novel of the living and the dead finally demonstrates how art can reach outward from the prison of the self to embrace mankind. Virgil is haunted by a still more troubling fear that his whole life has been only a game with words, that all words can do is to embellish, imperfectly duplicate, and thus falsify reality. "Nothing unreal is allowed to survive," he announces to his dismayed friends in order to explain his decision to burn the *Aeneid.* The major part of the novel is caught up in the backward and forward surge of debate over this harsh resolution. In the end, Virgil leaves the manuscript of the *Aeneid* in Caesar's possession, whether out of uncertainty, or inclination to compromise, or sheer fatigue, or some glimmering hope that his epic may not after all be entirely unreal.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Language, the dying poet perceives, is an instrument of treacherous duplicity, forever tempting us to take the resonant word for the thing itself. Yet if all reality, as Virgil tells Augustus, "is but the growth of perception," language remains the necessary medium for the realization of perception, and cadenced language shaped into images is our chief means of making the world around us real, binding the fragments of transient experience into a ring of lasting significance: "Human life was thus image-graced and image-cursed; it could comprehend itself only through images, the images were not to be banished, they had been with us since the herd-beginning, they were anterior to and mightier than our thinking, they were timeless, containing past and future, they were a twofold dream-memory and they were more powerful than we."

Perhaps it begins to be clear why this self-consciously "literary" novel was no self-indulgence for Broch. He began working on it not long before his months of imprisonment by the Nazis and his subsequent departure from Austria in 1938, and his very choice of this subject at that time and place suggests how the nightmare of history has driven much modern literature back upon itself, led it to rehearse the process of literary creation in order to discover what use literary creation might conceivably have in a world of nightmares. The chief use of literature that emerges from *The Death of Virgil* is as the one road of escape from what Broch calls the "herd-experience"—that primordial condition in which each individual creature cowers before the menace of death in his animal aloneness, crowding against the bodies around him for the surface warmth and solace of sheer physical closeness. Language, as the unique human instrument, and poetry, as the most complex ordering of language, lift man beyond the herd by placing his consciousness in touch with others, with the collective consciousness of mankind, with the shared human experience of the past back to its evolutionary beginnings, through all these allowing man to project an image of the future out of his trapped moments of existential dread. Sounds and colors and shapes have a timeless quality, always present as materials for the artist, but language is the one artistic medium that develops perceptibly through historical time, bearing the marks of past uses upon it, and thus literature is before all the others the memory-laden art, the one that resumes its past in the very act of exploiting its full resources for the expression of the present. Paul Goodman has recently formulated this essential operation of the literary imagination with a fine lucidity: "Man is the animal who makes himself and the one who is made by his culture. Literature repeats the meaning and revives the spirit of past makings, so they are not dead weight, by using them again in a making that is occurring now."* The possession of a past, then, is a necessary condition for the imagining of the future; the vaster and more varied the past, the richer the possibilities of the future will be.

Viewed in these terms, the very end of *The Death of Virgil* is not an outrageous self-assertion of poetry but a resonant culmination of Virgil's long inner journey. The poet's fantastically restless, image-spawning mind having explored the far reaches of personal and collective memory, Broch creates for him an apotheosis which fuses the Western literary memory of two great moments of creation, the first chapter of Genesis and the first chapter of John, memory thus triumphantly passing into renewal. The Logos here is not an embodiment or intermediary of the Divinity but is in itself the generating nub of existence, the image of the fulfilled perfection of language making reality, toward which all the imperfections of earthly poetry aspire: "The word hovered over the universe, over the nothing, floating beyond the expressible as well as the inexpressible, and he, caught under and amidst the roaring, he floated on with the word. . . ; it was the word beyond speech." It is characteristic of Broch that this assumption of the poet into eternity did not end his own inner dialogue on the worth of literature. Haunted by the revelations of the Nazi horrors, he resolved in his last years to abandon literature for the direct action of politics and the chaste precision of mathematics. Nevertheless, circumstances led him to rewrite for publication two earlier works, *The Tempter* and *The Innocent*, and it seems clear that there was some inner necessity as well that impelled him again to the making of fiction.

THE novels of Vladimir Nabokov offer a suggestive complement to Broch precisely because the two writers are so obviously antithetical in the way they approach history and art—Nabokov playfully elusive and ironic where Broch is argumentative or grandly assertive, Nabokov coolly dismissing (in the afterword to *Lolita*) all manifestations of the Literature of Ideas that is Broch's natural medium. On the surface, Nabokov might seem to be a preeminent example of the escapist tendency in 20th-century literature, and, indeed, one study of his English novels has adopted the unfortunate title, *Escape into Aesthetics*. Art and the artist are, in varying ways, the subject of all his novels, and his self-conscious fictions reflect infinitely greater interest in the history of the novel than in history as such, from the ingenious parody of *Madame Bovary* in *King, Queen, Knave* down to the great composite parody of the genre's development in *Ada*. Nevertheless, I would contend that the awareness of history significantly shapes Nabokov's perception of art in most of his work since the early 1930's, and that his art-centered

* "An Apology for Literature," COMMENTARY, July 1971.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

literary enterprise must finally be seen as a rescue operation on behalf of human consciousness in a world variously contrived to obliterate such consciousness. Stalking after the figure of the artist in many of Nabokov's fictions is some embodiment of Yakob Gradus, the imaginary and all-too-real assassin of *Pale Fire*, who is the perfect modern political man—the mindless instrument of his ideological masters, humanity reduced to an ambulating fleshly extension of the finger on the trigger, a creature of pure anti-imagination.

In this regard, Nabokov's two novels set in totalitarian states, *Invitation to a Beheading*, written in Berlin in 1935, and *Bend Sinister*, written immediately after World War II in this country, constitute an instructive test-case of his relationship to history, and of the general effort of the modern literary imagination to affirm its own abiding validity. Both books are formally constituted as novels about the construction of novels; in both, the protagonist is a kind of writer whose vivid inner life is about to be extinguished by a totalitarian regime that properly regards him as the ultimate subversive. Totalitarianism is seen in both novels as an insidious, not-quite-credible farce, rendered in a weird slapstick mode that surprisingly touches to the quick of the totalitarian principle by showing its crude mechanical reduction of the variety of human life, the wooden rigidity and crassness of its attempt everywhere to manipulate what cannot be manipulated. In such a world, the figure of the artist emerges as the most steadfast representative of mankind, and the act of imagination, far from being an aesthetic luxury, is the means by which humanity makes itself human and keeps itself human.

One of the most damaging effects of the imperious insistence of political life in recent decades has been an expectation that writers should respond directly to the political sphere, in its own terms; and in this respect it is noteworthy that neither Cincinnatus in *Invitation to a Beheading* nor Krug in *Bend Sinister* has any interest in writing about the totalitarian state which seeks to destroy him. Instead, both Cincinnatus the diarist and Krug the philosopher ponder the mystery of their own irreducible selfhood, the outrageous fact of mortality, the myriad ways in which circumscribed, inexhaustible consciousness constructs reality. Thus, the book Cincinnatus dreams of writing, which he adumbrates in his prison-cell diary, is not a denunciation of his stupid captors but a way to express the aching wonder of being a man, as men have done with artfully-ordered words since the shadowy beginnings of literary culture: "I issue from such burning blackness, I spin like a top, with such propelling force, such tongues of flame, that to this day I occasionally feel . . . that primordial palpitation of mine, that first branding contact, the mainspring of my 'I.' " And just a moment earlier, Cincinnatus sums up his aspiration: "I have lived an agonizing life, and I would like to describe that agony to you."

Literary allusion, as I have already intimated, has a peculiar centrality in much of the serious literature of our century. The frequency and complexity of allusion in writers like Nabokov, Joyce, Mann, Yeats, Eliot, Stevens, Borges, even Faulkner, are probably unprecedented, at least since the time of Dryden and Pope. In contrast, moreover, to the neo-classical writers, who could assume the literary past as a common point of departure, however ironically it might then be used, these moderns give the appearance of laboriously working through a vanishing or esoteric past, reconstituting it by an act of determined will, musing over the enigma of its pastness, variously using it to flesh out an otherwise hallucinatory present. Allusions can, of course, serve to reinforce a cultural elitism, but in Nabokov they generally act both to heighten a sense of play and to sharpen the focus of critical self-consciousness in the work of art. Literature, he constantly reminds us, is condemned to work with the models, conventions, and techniques of its own past; his parodistic invocation of past models turns them into objects of critical scrutiny even as they operate to evoke an imaginable world out of mere paper and print. In the second of Nabokov's two "political" novels, where the allusions are far more abundant and specific, they serve an implicitly thematic purpose. At first thought, it may seem gratuitously playful to mark a somber totalitarian landscape with references to and quotations from Mallarmé, Melville, Joyce, Flaubert, Maupassant, and a motley variety of other writers, but it is through such allusions that authorial intelligence—"the anthropomorphic deity" is Nabokov's phrase for it—asserts its power to move freely in a realm outside the totalitarian prison world, to exhibit a lively and witty awareness of imaginative possibilities transcending the field-gray uniforms, underground torture chambers, and other hackneyed formulas of the police state.

From this thematic viewpoint, it makes special sense that the central allusion in this novel is to one of the richest and most ultimately mystifying achievements of Western literature, *Hamlet*, with the figure of Shakespeare as poet of the ages looming like some monumental wraith through the half-lights of Adam Krug's bedeviled world. Perhaps with a gesture of obeisance to the library scene in *Ulysses*, Nabokov devotes an entire chapter, at the midpoint of the novel, to a discussion of the meanings of *Hamlet* and the elusive identity of Shakespeare, who emerges as the perfect paradigm of the Nabokovian artist-figure ("His name is protean. He begets doubles at every corner. . . . Who is he? William X, cunningly composed of two left arms and a mask"). In order to bring the police state in proper relation to Shakespeare, Nabokov treats us to several pages of a Marxist-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

National-Socialist-populist-mechanist reading of *Hamlet*. (The real hero is Fortinbras, Denmark is a decadent democracy "criminally misruled by degenerate King Hamlet and Judeo-Latin Claudius," the greatness of the plot is in the historically significant working out of mass justice, and so forth.) Against this, Krug's friend Ember, who is translating *Hamlet*, conjures up a possible film scenario of the opening scene that shows a ripe baroque inventiveness, finally pushing its own excesses into an open spoof of film convention, yet demonstrating how a responsive imagination has been moved into sudden life by a great imagination of the past. Ember then proceeds to recite to Krug a sample of his own translation of *Hamlet* into their native Germano-Slavic tongue while the philosopher contemplates the twin mysteries of creation and translation:

> Nature had once produced an Englishman whose domed head had been a hive of words; a man who had only to breathe on any particle of his stupendous vocabulary to have that particle live and expand and throw out tremulous tentacles until it became a complex image with a pulsing brain and correlated limbs. Three centuries later, another man, in another country, was trying to render these rhythms and metaphors in a different tongue. This process entailed a prodigious amount of labor, for the necessity of which no real reason could be given.

Shakespeare, as archetypal poet, is an inexplicable but ultimate fact of our shared existence in culture. A creature in nature, with a shell of skull-bone encasing gray matter like any other man, he could achieve such prodigies with words, themselves mere constructs of convention, that to explain what he did one is forced to invoke theological metaphors of creation and breathing life into inert things. Other life lives simply because it is born, one with the "herd-beginnings," living from moment to encapsulated moment in an unreflective present. Human life, because it possesses consciousness and memory, because consciousness generates language as its necessary instrument, must continually make more life through these uniquely human means if it is not to begin going dead. Nabokov sees that the most murderous aspect of totalitarianism is not the killing of people but the systematic extinguishing of consciousness —through social institutions, language-rules, pseudo-art, and simple terror—which could some day leave no survivors. Shakespeare's potent presence, then, in the minds of two citizens of this police state, becomes an aperture looking out "to another world of tenderness, brightness and beauty," as Nabokov wrote of a rather different device of authorial intervention in his 1963 introduction to *Bend Sinister*.

One should note that the most appropriate response to a presence like Shakespeare's is the desire to translate him, however futile and "unnecessary" the effort. Translation is one of the great recurring concerns of Nabokov's fiction, literal translation and translation in a series of related metaphoric applications. Each individual experience of a literary work is in effect a form of translation, the actual conversion of a text into the words of another language being only the most gross, and often painful, illustration of a process that goes on constantly at other levels. Thus, the commentary in *Pale Fire*, which itself devotes some attention to Zemblan translations of Shakespeare, is an extreme instance of a fantastic "translation" of John Shade's poem, flamboyantly demonstrating how a writer's work must always exist through the active mediation of someone else's imagination. Original literary composition is also a kind of translation—if one likes, a translation of immediate experience into words; in any case, a translation of earlier literature into the author's own idiom and mode of perception through his need as a writer to absorb and remake the literary past. To cite one central example that remains for Nabokov a crowning achievement of modern fiction, Joyce's *Ulysses* is not an imitation, not, according to the usual limiting acceptation of the word, a parody, but, in the sense I have described, a bold translation of Homer and the Bible, Swift and Fielding, Dickens, Flaubert, and many others. Ember's dedication to translating *Hamlet* under a regime that thinks of a machine as the ideal writing instrument means a stubborn commitment to sustaining the precious life of consciousness by remaking a past embodiment of it for the present time and place. Behind Ember stands Nabokov the artificer, affirming the high prerogatives of art by transmuting totalitarian terrors into the stuff of an ironically intelligent novel of flaunted artifice, where a poised perfection of style is the token of a state of grace, proving the power of plastic imagination to transcend the pervasive deathliness of the totalitarian world. Literature, then, turns out to be not an escape from history but the last line of man's defense against a history gone wild.

As IN many other matters of cultural history, the Jews constitute an especially peculiar, troublesome, and finally instructive case for the understanding of this general phenomenon. There are good and manifest reasons for writers with a deep Jewish consciousness to be suspicious of the saving power of art. The Jews have had no tradition of aesthetics as an autonomous realm, no historically-rooted notions of the poet as hero and guide. Some Jewish writers seem vaguely uncomfortable with the very idea of artistic originality, even as they aspire to it, as though it were something they had filched from European Romanticism without ever being quite sure of the genuineness of the article. Recalling a heritage that stressed sharpness of exegesis and legal argument, moral wisdom grounded in belief, Jews have generally found chill comfort in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

art as they saw themselves flung into the maw of modern history, too often its principal victims. In their vulnerable position of exposure and deracination, Jews have frequently proved to be the modernists par excellence, but, at least in some notable instances, they retain a lingering suspicion that the whole dramatic agony of modernity is not worth the candle, that there is something perhaps bogus and certainly futile in the effort to be authentically modern through a heroism of the imagination. It may be that Kafka's ultimate Jewish gesture is his deathbed instruction to Max Brod to burn his writings. "Nothing unreal is allowed to survive," and for Kafka the construction of mere stories without a *Wahrheitsgrund*, a substratum of truth theologically confirmed, must have finally seemed a deceptive play with alluring unrealities. (It is not surprising that Broch, a Jew converted to Catholicism, should comment on Kafka's last resolution with finely perceptive empathy.) No one has grasped this aspect of Kafka more firmly than Walter Benjamin, and Benjamin's own attitude toward modern literature in general exhibits a strange doubleness, richly responsive to its innovative daring and apprehensive of its possible factitiousness. Seeing the atrophy of experience as a basic process of modern history, he is not really willing to accept the adequacy of a merely literary response to this radical devolution. The controlled note of skeptical pessimism in his description of Proust's effort to recreate verbally the life of the imagination is characteristic: "*A la Recherche du temps perdu* may be regarded as an attempt to produce experience synthetically, as Bergson imagines it, under today's conditions, for there is less and less hope that it will come into being naturally."

The pressing dilemmas of history and art felt by the modern writer are likely to be sharpened if he is a Jew, and become even more acute if he writes in Hebrew. The unique history of the Hebrew language and its modern literary revival make Hebrew at once an anomaly among modern literatures and a paradigm—illuminating through its very extremeness—of literature trying to cope with the maelstrom of modernity. If, as I have suggested, language is the memory-laden medium, the Hebrew language is so thoroughly suffused with three millennia of historical and theological memories that some writers have felt they had to struggle actively against it in order to make it speak personally for them. One must imagine the peculiar interplay of dissonance and resonance when a language echoing Genesis, Jeremiah, the Psalms, the Talmud, the Midrash, and the liturgy, in its idioms, vocabulary, syntax, tonalities, is called on to respond to a pogrom, a revolution, a world war, genocide. Of course I don't mean to imply that there is anything particularly miraculous about the mere writing of a modern poem or story in Hebrew, but rather that it often creates imaginative difficulties for the writer, at the same time giving him an intermittent perspective of historical distance from the contemporary world he is rendering. In the case of the greatest modern Hebrew poet, H. N. Bialik, the perception of an unbridgeable gap between his grand biblical language and a modern spiritual decadence eventually led him to abandon poetry: nothing unreal could be allowed to survive, and the inner emptiness of the age finally made his language seem to him infected with unreality.

Stephen Spender has recently proposed that the Jewish poet, in contrast to poets deriving from the Christian and Greco-Roman traditions, sees himself above all as the voice of his people, and so writes with "purposes . . . didactic and mystical, not aesthetic." This seems to me decidedly an outside view of the matter. It is true that on occasion some modern Jewish poets have assumed the mask of the poet-prophet, but the very act of choosing to work through the European world of literary forms has generally meant a deep identification with European conceptions of art as individual expression and aesthetic value as an end in itself. Even Bialik, who speaks as an alienated, despairing prophet in *The City of Slaughter,* is more thoroughly characteristic of his own major phase when in *The Pond* and *Splendor* he conceives the poetic imagination as the creative center of existence. Especially in the case of poets writing in Hebrew, one can sometimes detect a dialectic tension between the prophetic and the aesthetic impulse, but for this very reason Hebrew, so long employed chiefly to record the course of God and His people through history, provides striking evidence of the self-affirming impetus of art in modern literature. Probably the most notable instance in Hebrew of such self-affirmation is the poetry of Bialik's great contemporary, Saul Tchernichovsky. This poet of the Crimea-Ukraine border region, an eyewitness to the mayhem of world war, revolution, and civil strife, often responded in his work with cries of outrage and anger, occasionally even with the fulminations of a militant Jewish nationalism. It is noteworthy, however, that Tchernichovsky's supreme assertions of the power of poetry occur in the midst of two historical cataclysms—his two sonnet-cycles, *To the Sun* and *On the Blood,* conceived in Odessa during the Russian civil war, and *The Golden People,* his long narrative poem on bees (and through the bees, on nature and art, poetry, history, and the future of man), written in Tel Aviv during World War II, near the end of his life.

Of the two sonnet-cycles, *On the Blood* is the more centrally concerned with art and politics, unabashedly affirming art as the sole redemptive force in a history where the loftiest ideals, once politicized, are translated into the most cynical and ruthless ideologies. *On the*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Blood is flawed in comparison with its companion cycle, at times unnecessarily crabbed in expression, occasionally lapsing into oratorical rhetoric, but the effect of the ensemble is stunning. The cycle, or "corona," is an intricate interlocking of fifteen Petrarchan sonnets, the last line of each poem constituting the first line of the poem after it, and the fourteenth sonnet ending with the first line of the cycle, followed by a final sonnet made up of all the preceding first lines, in sequence. Tchernichovsky's adoption of this extraordinarily difficult Renaissance form to face the historical chaos around him is suggestive: in a world of universal havoc, the poet insists on an elaborate traditional form that requires fine control and conciseness, a ramified syntax of words and images and ideas, thus confirming the power of poetry to make order even out of the dark night of the Western soul. The historical landscape here is what one might expect. As the end of the fourteenth sonnet renders it, man is drowning in rivers of blood, "A twilight of culture . . . confusion of realms. . . ./ Is darkness descending or dawn breaking?/ Stunned, we peer into the thick of the twilight,/ Tired of mankind and the legacy of the past." Every political ruler, every priest of a world-redemptive faith, finally becomes an inquisitor, announcing a doctrine of truth and love but creating a world where "falsehood reigns" and "Love goes sour like yeast in dough,/ Stinking over the heretics' pyres."

Against this grim historical reality, the poet can at least aver that his "mastery"—and Tchernichovsky uses a Hebrew root usually associated with tyrannical rule—of the realm of beauty is a form of power that does not involve the shedding of blood. But what good can it do? Tchernichovsky's answer, in the thirteenth sonnet, has been attacked by commentators as an instance of towering naiveté: "Masters of song and her lovely mysteries,/ Only you unite pasts and futures./ In the hymn of Akhneton, sung among pyramids,/ And the psalms of the son of Jesse poured forth in supplication." It is the quiet beauty of song, in the next quatrain, that strengthens the heart of slave and worker, stirring them to hope; and at the end of the sonnet: "If God has decreed a redemption to come,/ The world will be redeemed through poetry and song." Tchernichovsky, in the view of Baruch Kurzweil, one of his major critics, foolishly posits here an autonomous realm of poetry while unwittingly contradicting himself by choosing as examples two poet-kings very much implicated in the brutal processes of history, one of them the ruler of an empire built on the exploitation of slaves, the other responsible for both individual murder and the deaths of thousands in battle.

The contradiction between politics and poetry in Akhneton and David is in fact so glaring that it is hard to believe Tchernichovsky's reference to them could have been inadvertent. The choice of these two ancient rulers as exemplary bearers of the redemptive word of poetry is surely meant to point up a paradox. Poetry is not an autonomous realm but it has a power to work through history, transcending the political actions and intentions even of its own creators. The fact that David was a warrior king, that he murdered Uriah the Hittite, that, implacable even on his deathbed, he commanded Solomon to pay off old scores with his enemies, may affect the generations of man far less than do his psalms. The consequences of a deed done in history are of a limited magnitude, or at least eventually are no longer clearly traceable in the endless criss-crossings of subsequent historical events. The words of the poet-king, on the other hand, live on through an unending progression of literal and figurative "translations," kindling the imagination of an Augustine, a Judah Halevi, a George Herbert, opening up the feelings of countless men and women to a sharing of anguish and longing as facts of their humanity, to a trust in the coming of light after darkness. Poetry thus becomes the medium for an ongoing "affiliation with the human community"; in Tchernichovsky's words, it "unite[s] pasts and futures," thus sustaining the vision of a possible human community. This is not, I think, a naive faith in poetry. The assertion that the world will be redeemed through poetry and song is preceded by a conditional clause—if there is to be any redemption at all. Poetry here, as in Nabokov, is defined in terms of what politics cannot be. The opposition is formulated in the sonnet-cycle through a central metaphor of cult: the priests of worldly power are the perpetrators of a mendacious, murderous idolatry; the priests of poetry may in the end perhaps not avail, but at least they keep faith with making and remaking life instead of death in the name of life.

TCHERNICHOVSKY's affirmation of poetry attains still greater resonance in *The Golden People*, less by direct assertion than by demonstration through the wonderful moments of serene imaginative amplitude that occur in the long poem. Written, like *The Death of Virgil*, in the dark Hitler years, it, too, is from one point of view a taking stock of the resources of poetry; but it also brings to play in a single poetic edifice all the identities that were Tchernichovsky—naturalist, classicist, pantheist, nationalist, wondering child on the Russian steppes, bemused old man in Zion, a Jew speaking to Jews and reaching out for the wisdom and understanding of all men. The structure of the poem, then, itself illustrates the unique unifying power of poetry. The beehive to which the narrator constantly returns, surrounding it with a cloud of personal and literary recollections, is variously an image of the kibbutz, of the dreaded new collective order of mankind, of a perfectly adjusted harmony between individual and group, creature and nature. Correspondingly,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the song of the hive—the same Hebrew word means "song" and "poetry"—is a "dirge of slaves . . . bemoaning strangled feelings," or a beautifully attuned answering voice to nature's timeless song. On the one hand, the poet worries analytically at the meaning of the hive and its song in expository hexameters; on the other hand, he evokes the song itself in stanzaic forms (like that of "The Ballad of the Hive") which attain an exquisite lyric purity scarcely equaled in modern Hebrew poetry. War, revolution, and the prospect of the end of mankind flicker darkly in the background of the poem's sun-drenched perspectives, but in the foreground poetry delights in the beauty that it produces, demonstrating the mind's firm hold on a unity that is not mechanical and repressive, keeping the incipient apocalypse of the present in touch with past visions of order and peace after violence.

Exemplary in this regard are the three short poems grouped together by Tchernichovsky under the rubric of "Honey Songs." The subject of the first is Biblical, the second, Greek, and the third, Roman, so that a community of civilization among the three source-cultures of the Western world is implied in the very sequence of the poems. The second and third poems are in fact adaptations of poetic epigrams preserved in *The Greek Anthology*, while the initial poem is an original invention. The first poem ponders the riddle of Samson and the lion, eliciting from the paradox of sweetness out of strength some suggestion of poetry's alchemic working on the violent stuff of experience. (One might recall that Yeats in "Vacillation" settles on just this enigma of the lion and the honeycomb as the emblem of poetry transfiguring history and death.)

The road to Timna lies bare from Zorah
on down to the valley.
On both sides are vineyards. By the dip,
gleaming white,
A leonine skeleton, bone-sinews
still clinging to it:
Beautiful bone by a marvelous
bone of sheer power.
A swarm of bees buzzing casts sacred song in its
Labor over each flower, each bush
and each tree.
In the carcass, at its midmost, honeycomb
wealth to be taken
By the man who smote the lion: for from
the strong will come forth sweet.
A young lion he met, a young lion did he smite:
Young lion, young beast, young lion
and human young . . .
Man, why fear desert-lion's wrath—
you will rend him!
Wild beast has never stood ground before man.

I FEAR that my crude approximation of the original can give only the dimmest notion of the quiet poise of the Hebrew, which combines classical hexameters with Biblical diction and a hint of Biblical cadences. The serene control with which lion, beesong, and young Samson's triumph are evoked betokens a faith in man and his imagination, uncannily makes the fantastic assertion of the last line a plausible conclusion to the poem. The middle piece of the group of three poems, recasting lines by Apollonidas, is, after the implicit violence of the Samson verses, a hushed entreaty to let no harm befall the bees as they fill their chambered home with golden nectar. Finally, the third poem balances the first by conjuring up a matching image, after Philippus, of song and sweetness issuing from the relics of violence. Realizing for the Hebrew reader of 1941 a still moment of peace after war drawn from the ancient Roman world, the poem nicely illustrates the necessity of poetry and the literary heritage for the modern imagination. Any statement about killing yielding to beauty extracted from the poem and asserted discursively would have to seem only wishful thinking. Embodied concretely in the poem, which is itself meticulously placed in a larger poetic context, such an implication has the conviction of experienced truth. The poem, conceived at the nadir of historical horror as a "translation" of ancient poetry, creates a moment of grace in words, becoming thus a guarantor of spiritual sanity by intimating through a wholeness in language that there is a possible wholeness outside of language which man may yet attain:

Prow sheathed in iron, war-galley's
weapon, remains of
The battle of Actium—rests on the
shore of a quiet sea.
Become now a beehive and honey-filled
hollows of wax.
All around it the buzzing swarm
bustles.—This,
The sacred boon bestowed by
Caesar: he decreed,
And the enemy's armament sends forth
the blessing of peace.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON JEWISH HISTORY

The Colonial American Jew 1492-1776

By Jacob R. Marcus

"Jacob R. Marcus is possibly the most distinguished scholar of Judaica in the United States today. His new three-volume work represents a distillation of all his previous studies. It is a massive and massively informative book, and is much more than its title, *The Colonial American Jew,* suggests . . . His history is delightfully undusty, and the nature of his subject matter is so romantic (and so terrifying, and so discouraging, and so inspiring) that it is never boring. But its encyclopedic nature makes this a work to dip about in . . . It is good to have everything under one roof, as it were, and presented so coherently and with such responsibility."—Stephen Birmingham, *The Saturday Review.*

"Marcus, the most distinguished historian of American Jewry, labored on these three imposing volumes for nearly 15 years. . . . It is an extraordinary compendium of information about colonial Jewry and their setting. The volumes are sympathetic yet detached, highly professional works of scholarship. They are carefully organized, richly detailed, factually reliable, and well produced. All in all they will remain the standard descriptive study for decades to come."—*Choice.*

"By far the most authoritative study on the subject to date, the work elucidates a vital area of American history and is no less important for the general American historian than it is for the student of American Jewry. Highly recommended."—*Library Journal.*

3 volumes, slipcase, illustrated *$45.00*

Rabbinic Judaism in the Making

A Chapter in the History on the Halakhah from Ezra to Judah I

By Alexander Guttmann

"The culmination of years of work in the field by a recognized authority, this (book) surveys the building of the Jewish tradition from Ezra to Judah the Patriarch . . . It focuses primarily on the development of Jewish law and observance. The scholarship is deep and balanced (though) its usefulness is not limited to the scholar. It can serve as an excellent introduction to rabbinic history and thought . . . "—*Choice.*

344 pages *$17.95*

Lopez of Newport

Colonial American Merchant Prince

By Stanley F. Chyet

The biography of a Portuguese-Jewish immigrant who became the leading merchant-industrialist in pre-Revolutionary War Rhode Island. The portrait of an extraordinary Jewish life in colonial America.

246 pages *$8.95*

From East to West

The Westward Migration of Jews from Eastern Europe During the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

By Moses A. Shulvass

This book provides the first documented background material to the formation and growth of Jewish community life and cultural developments in Western Europe.

180 pages *$8.95*

order directly from

Wayne State University Press
Detroit, Michigan 48202

Please send ____ copy/ies of *The Colonial American Jew* @ $45.00 each
____ *Rabbinic Judaism* @ $17.95 each
____ *Lopez of Newport* @ $8.95 each
____ *East to West* @ $8.95 each

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Wayne State University Press
Detroit, Michigan 48202

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Family Fever Chart

Sonya Rudikoff

THE FAMILY was a social invention of our ancestors in the dim and shadowy past. They had been through the baboon troupe, and the primal herd, and apparently their new settled circumstances required a new kind of grouping. Through all the millennia that followed, the family survived various perils, defied destruction of every sort, and coped with attack from every quarter. In our own time, the family rarely encounters physical danger, but the intensity of other forms of assault makes up for the absence of savages, plagues, and acts of God. Of course, by now we all know that the family is mortally ill, and has been so for generations and generations. We have been having the news for some time. Signs of the illness can be seen way back, in the patriarchal family of the caves, then in early history, in Roman and Greek families, even in the medieval family with its large spirit and busy household of simple easy sociability. But disease may have really set in with industrialization and the break-up of the cohesive, comprehensive agricultural life. There seems to be general condemnation of the Victorian family of unhappy memory. The contemporary nuclear family, our suffering patient, has survived innumerable operations and barely retains its powers, except the power to legitimize children. We all know how diseased families transfer their affliction to innocent children, and, in fact, one of the most striking accomplishments of these times is the massive documentation of the family's role as a *deadly carrier* of social and mental illness. Absurd, you may say, or surely true only of the "bad" families! No, it is asserted, of all: any family, no matter how enjoyable to be part of, how charming, how admirable in the community—*any* family, *every* family, is guilty of transmitting the dread disease, even without exhibiting any of the symptoms!

What, actually, is the disease—or the crime? According to David Cooper, a British psychoanalyst, it is the family itself, its very existence, which is a crime, a "secret suicide pact."* The procreative and nurturing and educational operation of the family makes it an agency of repression, "an ideological conditioning device in any exploitative society." Like R. D. Laing, with whom he has been associated, Dr. Cooper believes that the family produces madness in its members, and then does not allow them to "live out" their madness, but imprisons them in labels and institutions. The intimacy of the family combined with its hierarchical structure make it "the ultimate form of non-meeting"; persons in a family are, by definition, unable to perceive and respond to one another's deepest needs or feelings. "The infrastructure of the family blocks meeting between any one person and any other, and demands a sacrificial offering on the part of each of us." Like Laing, Cooper believes that families oppress as "mad" those members who refuse to conform to the madness which is family life. Indeed, the behavior often labeled by psychiatrists as "schizophrenic" is, in this view, the really sane person's attempt to cope with a really mad environment.

Cooper also believes that the problem is political, because the family is reinforced by the surrounding society—not just because we "project" family feelings onto society, but more because the forms of social life themselves replicate family tyranny: hierarchical groups reproduce the structure of family authority, and create the consequent repression, withdrawal, and deadening of affect. "Families destroy doubt and the experience of living one's own body," alienating people from their true selves, invading their personal space. "All the metaphors of 'paranoia' are a poetic protest against this invasion. . . . The problem is not to 'resolve' the persecutory anxieties but lucidly to *use* them to destroy an actual, objective persecutory situation that one is caught up in from even before one's beginnings."

THE QUARREL here is not merely with psychiatry, but more with society itself as it is embodied in the family. Cooper looks expectantly to the Third World, that is, to Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and also to what he calls the secret "third world" that lies hidden in the heart of the "first," imperialist, world: "I shall define this secret third world later—for the moment, suffice it to say that it is black (whatever one's literal color), hippie, orientated to local seizure of power in factories, universities, schools. It's deprived not *of* education but *by* education, it breaks the cannabis laws and more often than not gets away with it, and it knows how to burn cars and make bombs that sometimes work." Revolution is the point—the goal?—and, later on, continuous revolution will be urged as the only defense against rigid replications of family structure. In the meantime, the only salvation lies in the destruction of the exist-

SONYA RUDIKOFF *has written for* Partisan Review, Dissent, Arts, *and other journals.*

* *The Death of the Family,* Pantheon, 145 pp., $5.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing family, and in the formation of non-hierarchical communities which allow each person the privacy of his own mind and body, and which can be entered into and left by choice, unlike the family. Cooper and Laing founded the Philadelphia Association to sponsor such groups, whose primary purpose is to allow people to integrate the "mad experience" by providing warmth and human acceptance in responsive, non-judgmental, non-psychiatric settings without the manipulation or repression of families and psychiatric hospitals. In addition to these "mad" communities, Dr. Cooper envisages "street communes" inhabited by people who would share one another's lives and be able to "meet" in openness and non-possessive love, who could recover their instinctual lives and live in their own bodies again.

Alone, a person becomes "mad" trying to live in a "mad" society; but working together with others who don't think him mad, and who are like him themselves, it becomes possible not only to seek a sane life, but to revolutionize private life altogether, and, by explicit program, to disrupt and destroy the entire functioning of "imperialist" society. Dr. Cooper not only calls for destructuring and dissolving the family, but speaks of Centers of Revolutionary Consciousness, and Red Bases, which could sponsor cells in universities and institutions; the cells would offer sanctuary as non-hierarchical communities and also plan disruptions of the institution by various guerrilla tactics. These communities must be seen as prototypes, examples for the future, rather than the future itself. Naturally, we are all still in the "first world," not the "third world," but Dr. Cooper advises that "in a sense, all we have to do first, in our first-world context, is to liberate ourselves personally by a Madness Revolution"; we have already been told that, among other things, madness is "the attempt to make oneself ungoverned and ungovernable." The program is explicitly political: "what we want, in short, is not to chew our loaf, but to consume the system, so that at last we might get a taste of ourselves."

The echo of old familiar controversies hovers over Dr. Cooper's angry flat assertions, his gnomic slogans, his impatient summaries of ideas and events. If his tone recalls the late prose style of D. H. Lawrence, his subject points back further, linking the death of the family with the long history of the interest in madness and sanity. Writers, philosophers, poets, priests, rulers, and social scientists, all have considered the links between private disorder and public order, between schism in the soul and schism in the state. Calling into question the health of the whole society, Dr. Cooper inevitably raises in our minds, if not in his own, the long lineage of these problems and the record of so many serious confrontations with them.

Cooper also speaks of tenderness and self-realization, meeting others in honesty and freedom, living one's own life and dying one's own death, about people who dare not speak their truth but can be liberated to do so, everyone free from others' demands, loving in freedom, revealing one's dreams, and loving oneself before loving others. In Cooper, this nearly exhausted but still hardy strain is crossed with Guevara, existential psychoanalysis, and Maoist activism, to emerge as an ostensibly new revolutionary "third world" gesture directed at the "first world." But, after Marx, after the history of socialism, after anarchism, after Freud, after Keats, after Joyce, Mann, Gide, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Valéry, after the Russian Revolution, China, Czechoslovakia, after Cézanne, Matisse, Picasso, Mondrian, Pollock, after Corbusier, after Artaud, Ionesco, Beckett, the Becks—are we supposed to respond as if we had never heard anything like it before, had never heard any doctrines of liberation, or of the inspired language the self requires, any ideas about the fate of old forms or the explosion of new ones, or the urgency of expression, in short, as if we were coming freshly to new and vibrant ideas? *After such knowledge, what forgiveness?*

Revolutionaries who read will look to mentors other than David Cooper and R. D. Laing, and young people intent on founding or joining communes, or devising other ways to live, may not consult anyone except their peers and *The Whole Earth Catalogue*. Of what use, then, is this discussion of the family? Who will read it, whom will it affect? It is not a series of observations or a study whose conclusions can be tested; rather, it is a manifesto, an exhortation, a prescription. Social change is slow, however. The family is obviously resilient, flexible, useful, ancient, and capable of almost unimaginable adaptation. What if the new social forms take longer to establish themselves than is currently being predicted? Or what if they don't occur as described? After all, many people do *not* believe the family is dead or dying, even if it is not the most satisfactory arrangement; they would rise to preserve, protect, and defend this endangered institution with power and conviction, quite as determined as those who would destroy it. All the engaged girls composing their own marriage services, and planning the ceremonies for dawn in the forest or dusk on a hilltop, they don't believe the venture they're embarked upon has *already* failed!

FURTHERMORE, there are numerous people in many parts of this country, and in the rest of the world, in many countries, who live in families, who bring up children expecting to live in families, who find family life essential, even rewarding. These families may not approximate the extended family of socio-historial mystique, or the free-floating claustral nuclear group, and their problems and inconsistencies are quite well-documented, but, nevertheless, they are durable and useful associations. Quite large numbers of people would not welcome any of the new forms of social life, and would reject opportunities to become part of group marriages, or communal families, or unisex dormitories. The people who predict and record the death of the family always assume that these large numbers simply haven't got-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ten the good news about communes, and that, when they do, they will rush to join up. This is by no means self-evident.

If the death of the family is not to happen right away, then how do we wait out the period of inevitable dissolution? After all, people have to commit themselves to jobs, schools, apartments, houses, vacations, secretarial help, welfare payments, construction projects, domestic help, available funds, transportation, business decisions. A man who runs a landscaping service and employs his old father, his two cousins, an occasional nephew who can't find a summer job, a married niece to do the bookkeeping—how should he view the future of the family? He does lawn-mowing and general gardening for a number of families, and supports his own large family by this business. How soon should he plan to give it up entirely? If all those families are about to break up, the children to children's communes, the parents to their own separate communities of self-realization, then what about the lawns and gardens? Of course, the houses might accommodate communes; the living rooms might not be big enough for meetings, but there are playrooms, dining rooms, studies, libraries; the kitchens can't feed more than twenty-five at a time, but they could eat in shifts. Some communards might pitch tents on the lawns. And they would all want to do their own lawn-mowing, if they mowed at all, or perhaps turn all the lawns into vegetable gardens which they would work cooperatively. And when will all this happen—in a day? a year? a decade? or a generation?

Institutions change more slowly than feelings, as we know. The family may be long in dying, but in the meantime, behavior will be modified, customs changed, beliefs, convictions, habits will fade, become distorted, or disintegrate. Tone, temper, and manners can turn sour and abrasive before the crumbling of the relationships they characterize. This discrepancy, that forms can be maintained even when emotions and opinions are ambivalent or ambiguous, has always been taken as a sign of the insincerity of the family, of its failure to permit true "meeting" among its members. Indeed, the evidence of hidden hostility and unconscious or disguised motives in the forms of family life is used as proof, if it were needed, of the constraint and repressiveness of the family and of the society that replicates it.

Perhaps this lack of congruence between feelings and forms can be allowed—*reculer pour mieux sauter*—and we can consider the possibility that if social forms were entirely transparent and unambiguous, social change would probably be impossible. Even in practical terms, this discrepancy has shown itself to provide a certain convenience and utility: those who mount guerrilla actions against the institutions of society always count on the conformity of their enemies, their observance of social forms, and their liberal devotion to parliamentary procedures which may fail to express the passions of the moment. Would a guerrilla group have entertained a guerrilla action against Columbia or Stanford or the London School of Economics if they had thought they would meet other guerrillas when they got inside?

NEVERTHELESS, prototypes are examples, and people pay attention to examples—"For, by the image of my cause, I see the portraiture of his," said Hamlet, and why not everyone? It is especially true in a country with powerful and sophisticated mass media, and a large post-literate public. All sorts of notions spread with unimaginable speed, not only notions but trains of thought, whole arguments, ideas, attitudes: everything is vulnerable. One can no longer even speak of people being *influenced* by the mass media when so many do not even live at a sufficient distance from the media for *influence* to occur. The consequences of living *in* the media, as fish live in water, is not that social change necessarily occurs as fast as opinions change, but perhaps the opposite: that opinions and preoccupations shift with vertiginous rapidity while social institutions follow a different sequence, and pace, of change or of adaptation.

Thus, as "the nuclear family" and "the death of the family" become catchwords, and young people decide not to found families—or, as is common, to have babies but not families—it will be interesting to observe what happens to existing family relationships: Are they maintained, or do they weaken and shrivel? Do parents contribute to communes the money formerly set aside for college fees? Won't older people get the message, too, and, like the young, withdraw their feeling from a project they are told is irrelevant, and instead devote themselves to belated self-realization? What of uncles, aunts, sisters, brothers? And if any young woman has been so foolish as to begin a family life, at least she need not now compound the error by wasting time on it. Nor will the father of the young family fail to see the handwriting on the wall. Of course they will find no grandparents around to advise or baby-sit, because the grandparents are not asleep. And certainly no cousins, young nieces, unoccupied aunts—that all disappeared years ago, when the family's existence was first observed to be precarious. Then, let us include the parents of middle-aged children, as they are sometimes called, the eight-to-thirteen group, and the teen-aged. Why should anyone care whether this child perfects his tennis, or that one gets a cage for mice, or another is on the swim team? The merest shelter will do for this defunct alliance, minimal standards of comfort and order, the most rudimentary provisions for recreation, food, and clothing, to supplement the school and day-care center. And what of the children themselves? What will be their perception of these decaying relationships, these desiccated feelings, and the observed consequences? What will they learn about their own future from what they see?*

Perhaps we should ask, instead, *whom* will they see? Teachers, counselors, and day-care assistants,

* I am grateful to John and Elizabeth Gutman for valuable discussions of this whole subject.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Possibly the most charming aperitif

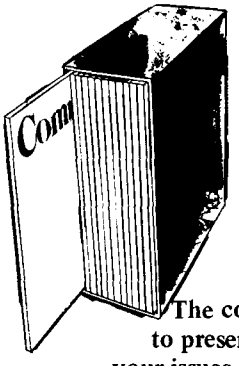
you've never tasted.

Lillet Blanc. The continental aperitif for lunch time, cocktail time, dinner time or any time.

LILLET

Imported by Dreyfus-Ashby Company, N.Y.

COMMENTARY SLIPCASE



An elegant addition to your library shelves.

The convenient way to preserve and organize your issues of Commentary. Each 9" x 12" slipcase of blue Boltoflex with "Commentary" stamped in gold-leaf, holds 12 issues.

1-3 slipcases $5.00 ea. 4-9 slipcases $4.50 ea. 10 or more slipcases $4.00 ea. (add 25 cents per slipcase for shipping.)

COMMENTARY 165 East 56th St., N.Y.C. 10022

Gentlemen:
Please send me ____Slipcases at $ ____ea.
I enclose my check or money order for a total of $ _____.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____State _____Zip _____

obviously. If the family is dead or dying, such children as do exist, or arrive by social parthenogenesis, will probably be brought up in a children's house, in a children's world in which the restrictions and constraints on the children would have to be very great so that the adults might have the way clear for their own openness and self-discovery, even for their own communal labor, as the reports of the kibbutzim make clear. There is further evidence from other kinds of communities that the organization of labor poses certain problems once the number of workers increases to a point larger than the family, even when there are shared and agreed-upon goals. In fact, the history of utopian communities should be made required reading for anyone interested in non-hierarchical consensual groups.

BUT is it really a choice only between family and commune? Is there nothing in between, has there never been anything else? What about labor unions, dining clubs, skating groups, tennis groups, singing societies, charity organizations, alumni activities, professional societies, sports clubs, secret societies, social-welfare associations, baby sitters, car pools, poker clubs, religious organizations, local political parties, adult schools, municipal government, hospital auxiliaries, groups for civic betterment, friends of libraries and museums, ethnic organizations, dramatic societies, parent-teacher associations, choirs, dancing schools, women's organizations—why has the discussion of the family been allowed to proceed without any mention being made of all those countless links and reverberations, those ancillary activities and connections which are *not* the family, but which are nevertheless very strong associations between people, and not only in tiny claustral groups, but in smaller and larger assemblages of heterogeneous people, and not merely temporary but often of some duration? These are, moreover, communities one enters and leaves by choice, and they provide the setting for innumerable forms of self-realization.

The web of extra-familial groups, voluntary associations as they are often called, was exactly what de Tocqueville noticed when he came to this country: in the absence of large ancient families, rooted to place, with a sense of connection, the Americans developed other kinds of associations, invented communities. Other nations have had them in addition to the sense of family, as, for instance, in the workingmen's societies in England. We may wonder, is it part of the assertion of the death of the family that voluntary associations have expired as well? Or is it rather that those who are most convinced of the death of the family, and most optimistic about its speedy decline, have seen only the tiny nuclear family in the vacant interstellar spaces, and have simply never noticed this complex set of structures?

In an atmosphere of new relationships and self-discoveries, it becomes ominously clear that very little will be done to preserve or defend relationships which already exist, or people already in specific situations; not much effort will be made to repair damaged families or damaging relationships, but only to foster new self-realizations. We might well ask, whose self-realizations? People intent upon freeing their own potentialities, and recovering their own instinctual lives, are not always alert to the needs of others in different situations; indeed, it is the needs of others they are often fighting. And those who are going through the madness which Dr. Cooper wants to protect for them will require others who are willing to help, without demanding the same thing for themselves at the same time. Why should anyone do it? How will they have learned to do it, if they have never seen anyone older in daily life?

And, for those who are perhaps too old to begin living in new communities, or who have already had their dramas of self-discovery and self-realization and may not wish to have another, or may now have something else in mind, who is to help? Older people may not have so much to contribute to new communities, they may have lost, or never possessed, wisdom,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

charm, talents, accomplishments, wealth, or strength. Like children, adolescents, and everyone else, they have the wish and the need to be valued for themselves alone, not because they are interesting, affable, useful, or companionable, but only because they exist. Today there are as many old people in the country as there are black people—are they to be locked up in the ghettos of St. Petersburg, in leisure villages, and old people's homes? And what will the society be preparing for, when that often-cited 50 per cent of our population now under twenty-five becomes, before they realize it, over sixty-five? All those uncles and grandparents, and second cousins and sisters and aunts, *they* won't live to see the death of the family and their own liberation from constraint, all they will see is despair, unpleasantness, false personalization, cruelty, indifference, selfishness, their own and everyone else's, and abrasive behavior everywhere. And what will be the value, then, of these impassioned attacks on families, these evangelical appeals for consensual communities and freedom and feeling and the imperatives of personal identity? Who then will be constrained, manipulated, alienated from their feelings and bodies?

The Real Grandees

Edouard Roditi

An aura of special glamor—all those exotic-sounding names perhaps, Rodriguez, Carvalho, Lopes, Pereira Mendes—seems to attach itself to the Sephardic Jews, that segment of Jewry which traces its origins to medieval Spain and Portugal and among whose ancestors, it is often claimed, can be found advisers to royalty, distinguished scholars, scientists, statesmen, and adventurers who flourished in the Iberian peninsula prior to the late-15th-century expulsions. Be that as it may, in many a circle Sephardic Jews are regarded as a superior species, more "aristocratic" than their Ashkenazic co-religionists and certainly of a tonier social cut. The recent publication of Stephen Birmingham's *The Grandees: America's Sephardic Elite**—the very title sets the blue blood racing—affords an opportunity for a discussion of where Sephardic *yichus* properly resides. I shall focus my attention, as does Birmingham, on the American aspect of the phenomenon, making whatever detours of time and space the subject—a vast and complicated one, I fear—dictates.

The first community of Sephardic-Jewish families known to have settled anywhere in what later became the United States of America was established by the twenty-three refugees who, in 1654, arrived in New Amsterdam harbor aboard the *St. Charles*. The truth is that, far from being members of an elite, they were a rather sorry company, men and women of no particular distinction or learning and of very modest pretensions. Escaping from a Dutch colony in Brazil which had been captured by the Portuguese, they were trying to make their way to Holland when they fell into the hands of Spanish pirates. They were later rescued at sea by the French captain of the *St. Charles*, who then brought them to New Amsterdam.

When some of the descendants of the *St. Charles* refugees at last acquired enough wealth, after two or three generations of increasingly prosperous trade, to emerge from the near-incestuous tangle of intermarriage to which they had at first been reduced by their geographical isolation, they began to marry into a few Sephardic families that already enjoyed wealth and prestige in the West Indies and even in London. In this respect, it is significant that two of New York's most prominent Sephardic families, the Solises and the de Solas—of whom more below—whose members have long been among the more vociferous claimants to an aristocratic ancestry, first appeared on the New York scene more than a hundred years after the arrival of the *St. Charles* (which eventually, of course, came to be known as the "Jewish Mayflower").

For all that, Birmingham unquestioningly accepts the myth of the grand lineage of the *St. Charles* passengers: their ancestors, he writes, had "lived as princes of the land" and had been "poets, philosophers, physicians, judges, astronomers, and courtiers." Many a Jew who lived in medieval Spain or Portugal is described as having been a "Don," as if this were some form of hereditary title of nobility and not merely a polite Spanish form of address generally used in conversation with an older, wealthier, or more learned man.

In one of his concluding chapters Birmingham discusses, in a somewhat patronizing and disparaging manner, the "other" Sephardim, those who emigrated from Spain and Portugal to North Africa or the Ottoman Empire and whose descendants began to settle in the Americas only in the early years of the 20th century. These Sephardim, we are told, were "poor and unsophisticated" and had "lacked the adaptability that would have allowed them to accept conversion." From this one must conclude that the real distinction of New York's Sephardic *haut monde* consists in its being descended from *conversos*, that is, Jews who accepted baptism under the Inquisition and thus managed to marry into the Christian aristocracy of Spain and Portugal before escaping abroad and reverting to Judaism and, in many cases, finally shuttling back into the Christian fold by marrying into America's Protestant elite.

There is, however, massive historical evidence to prove that many of Spain's most distinguished Jewish families had either retreated with the defeated Moors to North Africa, where they founded wealthy and learned communities, especial-

Edouard Roditi *has recently returned to Europe from an assignment as Regents' Professor in the Humanities at the University of California at Santa Cruz. His biography of Magellan will be published next year by Herder and Herder.*

* Harper & Row, 386 pp., $10.00.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ly in the cities of Fez, Meknes, and Tetouan; or else, anticipating Ferdinand and Isabella's decree expelling all practicing Jews, emigrated to Portugal, Italy, or North Africa before the expulsion order became official. Most of Spain's other leading Jewish families, with very few exceptions, then followed suit, organizing the mass emigration of whole communities, mainly to North Africa and to the Ottoman Empire.

The Abravanel family, for instance, first went to Portugal and then to Italy before finally settling in the Ottoman Empire. The equally distinguished and wealthy Benveniste family is reputed to have chartered ships to transport poorer Spanish Jews to Salonika, where Benvenistes continued for over five hundred years to engage in banking and to assume responsibilities as community leaders. Today, the president of Salonika's decimated community is David Benveniste (he recently sponsored the publication of a particularly fine illustrated Haggadah, with text in Hebrew, Ladino, and modern Greek). Before its near-total extermination by the Nazis, the Jewish community in Greece boasted many of the great names of medieval Sephardic scholarship and communal leadership: Abravanel, Abulafia, Aboav, Ainkaoua, Belinfante, the aforementioned Benveniste, all the way through the alphabet to Tovelem (which is but a Hebrew translation of Belinfante) and Zacuto.

Rich or poor, learned or "unsophisticated," all those Sephardim of Spain and Portugal who remained firm in their Jewish faith sought to escape from the Inquisition to countries where they might find existing Jewish communities and live and educate their children openly as Jews. Thus, in addition to North Africa and the Ottoman Empire, Sephardic families also found their way to Italy, the Rhineland, Prague, and even to Poland and the Ukraine, where such names as Peretz and Perutz became the phonetic transcription of a Spanish Perez and Portuguese Pires, and Brandes or Brandeis of a Portuguese Brandao or Brandaos.

In Spain and Portugal themselves, there remained, after various measures of expulsion or forced conversion, only *conversos* and crypto-Jews. Of course, many of these "New Christians," or their descendants, also escaped abroad, though generally much later, when the Inquisition, after a period of grace which lasted about a generation, began to threaten them again —this time as "Judaizing heretics," rather than as Jews. The immensely wealthy family of Joseph Nasi, to cite one example from this later period, escaped from Portugal to Antwerp and ultimately to Constantinople. Their escape occasioned a series of financial crises in the 16th century as the family's enormous funds were gradually withdrawn from various royal exchequers across Europe and moved to Turkey. Under the Ottoman Sultan, Joseph Nasi then held court as the Duke of Naxos and even sought to avenge himself on the Inquisition by organizing an alliance of Moslem and Protestant powers to defeat Catholic Spain and Portugal.

NEW YORK'S earliest Sephardic settlers—the hapless twenty-three—also appear to have belonged to this later migration of former *conversos* and their descendants. Although they may have first settled officially in Portuguese Brazil as Christians, they openly reverted to Judaism during the brief period when the more liberal Dutch established a colony there (only to flee when the Dutch settlement was recaptured by the Portuguese).* But who could such *conversos* have been? As we have seen, the wealthier and more cultured refugees from the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisition generally escaped elsewhere—to the Ottoman Empire or to Europe. It was only the most desperate who found themselves reduced to seeking their fortunes in the Americas, or in the other overseas colonial areas. Until the end of the 19th century, in fact, few truly distinguished Jewish families were tempted to seek refuge or to settle in the wilds of the Americas, where a devout Jew could not be assured of finding proper religious instruction for his sons. When my own grandfather emigrated to Boston from Constantinople, close on a hundred years ago, his family had lost its fortune in Turkey as a consequence of disastrous wars in the Crimea and the Caucasus—but there were wealthy and prominent relatives in Turkey, Egypt, Italy, England, and France. In their eyes, his emigration to America seemed unnecessarily adventurous.

Jewish families with traditions of learning in Spain or Portugal had nearly all settled in the more liberal cities of Italy, especially in Genoa, Venice, Leghorn, Ferrara, Modena, and Ancona, or else in North Africa and the Ottoman Empire; some famous Kabbalist families even settled under the protection of the Ottoman Sultans in Safed, today a showplace of ancient Sephardic culture in Israel. As for the more affluent Sephardic families of Spain and Portugal, whose wealth was derived from trade with overseas colonies, they found their way mainly to such commercial centers as Bayonne, Bordeaux, Rouen, Amsterdam, London, and the Hanseatic cities of the North Sea. The rise of the Dutch, English, French, and Danish East-India Companies was indeed due, to a large extent, to this influx of Sephardic capital and business skill. Amsterdam in particular became, within a couple of generations, a great center not only of trade and finance, but also of Jewish learning, the home of Manasseh ben Israel, of Spinoza, and of the Belinfante family of printers and publishers. The wealthy Jewish merchants and bankers of Holland imported Jewish scholars to tutor their sons from the whole Sephardic Diaspora, from as far away as Morocco. (Morocco was also the source of certain picturesque Jewish beggars, attracted to Amsterdam by the wealth of its Jewish community; they can be recognized in Rembrandt's paintings and drawings by their distinctive headgear.) When well-to-do or learned families began

* Birmingham writes that "Sephardic communities can be found today virtually wherever the Dutch had outposts—Guiana, Polynesia, the West Indies." Birmingham is mistaken about Polynesia which never contained any Dutch settlements; he may have had in mind Indonesia or Western Melanesia. At any rate, no Sephardic communities were founded further east than Cochin, on the Malabar coast of India, where an ancient Jewish community was already in existence for at least ten centuries, and in the Dutch East Indies island of Java.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to move from Holland to England, the economist David Ricardo was one of the first to distinguish himself in England's intellectual life.

LARGE-SCALE private trade with the Americas began to be truly profitable only in the late 17th century, two hundred years after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. Birmingham's description of the role played by New York's and Newport's Jewish pioneers in the pre-Revolutionary American trade in slaves, furs, wheat, and other goods reveals how modestly it began, but also how rapidly it expanded. The twenty-three Sephardim who originally disembarked from the *St. Charles* were paupers or debtors, entirely dependent on local charity for their immediate subsistence and on the protection of Amsterdam's distant Sephardic magnates in order to overcome Peter Stuyvesant's unwillingness to accept them as settlers. Within four generations some of their descendants had prospered spectacularly and by 1750 were already marrying, as noted, into the well-established Sephardic families of London, Holland, and the West Indies.

Still, the Sephardim of New York and Newport, however wealthy, appear to have failed to gain acceptance into the truly great Sephardic families of Western Europe or of the Ottoman Empire. Nowhere in the complex genealogies that Birmingham has appended to *The Grandees* can one find a single direct connection with a Pereire from Bordeaux, a Rodriguez from Bayonne, a Teixeira de Mattos or a Lopes Suasso from Amsterdam, a Mocatta, a Montefiore, or a D'Avigdor-Goldsmid from London, a Donati from Italy, a Benveniste from Salonika, or a Camondo from Constantinople. On the other hand, the tiny Sephardic communities of America seem to have absorbed a number of pioneer Jewish families that had come to America from Germany or from Poland. In addition to the famous Haym Salomon —a Polish Jew who prospered as a financier in Revolutionary America but advised his European relatives not to follow him because they might find the milieu insufficiently Jewish—Birmingham's roster of America's Sephardic elite also includes a number of suspiciously Ashkenazi names such as Etting and Franks.

In other respects, too, Birmingham's chronicles and genealogies will disappoint a seeker after evidence of true *yichus,* as Jews have traditionally understood the term. On the basis of the few families with whose history he is concerned, it would seem that America's Sephardic elite failed to produce, throughout the whole of the 19th century, a single scholar, writer, or artist of note, with the exception of the minor poet Emma Lazarus (of Statue-of-Liberty fame) and the little-known portrait painter Jacob Hart Lazarus, both of whom Birmingham ticks off in a line or two.* A reader of *The Grandees* might thus conclude that America's Sephardim totally refrained from association with the nation's intellectual and artistic elite, this in an age when Disraeli and Grace Aguilar were respected as writers in England, when Isaac da Costa was counted among Holland's most outstanding Romantic poets, when the Pereire and Rodriguez families in France were patrons, respectively, of the economist Saint-Simon and of the painter Delacroix, when Camille Pissaro was already one of the leaders among the French Impressionists. It is therefore all the more regrettable that Birmingham should have failed to include, among others, such 19th-century American Sephardic figures, prominent in the arts and letters, as Sabato Morais (1832-97), one of the founders of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and author of the scholarly study, *Italian Hebrew Literature* (recently reprinted by Hermon Press); or Solomon da Silva Solis (1819-54), a co-founder, in 1845, of a precursor of the Jewish Publication Society of America; or the painters George de Maduro Peixotto (1854-1937) and Ernest Clifford Peixotto.

A KEY figure in the Birmingham survey is the late Miss Elvira Nathan Solis of New York (who died in 1953), the legendary Aunt Ellie, in whose oral accounts of past family grandeur, lovingly recalled by present-day members of her numerous clan, the author places unremitting trust. Aunt Ellie may indeed have had a phenomenal memory—she certainly had formidable "connections," being related to a bewildering array of Nathans, Seixases, Cardozos, and Hendrickses —but her mental data-bank seems to have stored mainly the kind of gossip, legend, and rumor that could feed her incorrigible snobbism. And as the reader untangles his way through this Oral Scripture, so to speak, it becomes apparent that the Aunt-Ellie variety of socially-prominent New York Sephardim has insisted all too much on its unproven aristocratic origins while relegating to oblivion friends or relatives in the arts.

The absurdity of their pretensions attains a peak of sorts in Birmingham's transmission of the information that "a certain Marquesa Lopes," who lived in 15th-century Spain or Portugal, was "undoubtedly a distant ancestor of Aaron Lopez," the 18th-century Newport slavetrader (whose business activities, incidentally, Birmingham sets forth in detail). Should we then believe that the French philosopher and essayist Montaigne, whose mother in Bordeaux was also a Lopez, was likewise "undoubtedly related" to the Newport worthy? The names "Lopez" or "Lopes" are as common and widespread throughout the Iberic world as are "Smith" or "Jones" in the English-speaking world, where no historian would dare suggest that all Smiths or Joneses are "undoubtedly" related.†

Mere family names, in the absence of additional documentary evidence of genealogical relation-

* Lazarus's wife, however, Amelia Barnard Tobias Hart Lazarus, is the recipient of five full pages. She apparently owes this largesse to her having once been "one of New York's great authorities on the intricacies of the calling-card ritual."

† A further example of such absurdity is the claim of the Seixas family of American Sephardim to be related, on the basis of fanciful etymology, to the family of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha; but this was only the geographical name of the German principality that this latter family once ruled and was never its actual family name. No Seixas of "Grandee" provenance has yet claimed, however, to be related to the Portuguese Surrealist poet Cruzeiro Seixas, who was surprised when I recently told him in Lisbon that his name is also a Jewish one.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ship, can indeed be very misleading. The American descendants of a certain James de Fonseca-Brandon (1764-1843) have thus claimed to be related, according to Birmingham, to the "Dukes" of Suffolk, who were actually only Earls, and whose family name also happens to be Brandon. But the fact is that all Sephardic Brandons are descended from Portuguese-Jewish families originally named Brandao before the name was anglicized and spelled and pronounced like that of the Earls of Suffolk. Because the Portuguese plural of this name is Brandaos, it has also been transformed, in Germany and Poland, into Brandes and Brandeis. No American Fonseca-Brandon, however, has yet been known to pride himself on any blood relationship with the famous Danish-Jewish writer Georg Brandes, or with the late Justice Louis D. Brandeis, though both may also be descended from a common Portuguese-Jewish ancestor of James de Fonseca-Brandon.

THE Solis and de Sola families of New York are perhaps the most conspicuous and zealous advertisers of their "distinguished" Sephardic lineage. Repeatedly, they have claimed as ancestors a number of scholars, statesmen, physicians, and financiers who happened to have borne the Solis and de Sola names in medieval Spain or Portugal without necessarily even being related to each other. Nor can the American de Solas and Solises produce indisputable proof of being descended from any of these vaunted forebears. The genealogies that they adduce contain mysterious gaps that sometimes extend over two or more generations without any explanation.

Actually, both Solis and de Sola have never been unusual names in the Spanish-speaking world. In 1515, a navigator named Juan de Solis was the first to discover the Plata estuary in South America (where he was later killed and eaten by cannibals). In the Golden Age of Spanish drama, Antonio de Solis y Rivadeneyra (1610-80) wrote a play that has survived and a *History of the Conquest of Mexico*. But it has never been proven that either of these de Solises was of Jewish extraction. In the Autumn 1970 issue of *Books Abroad*, an international literary quarterly published by the University of Oklahoma, I now find reviews of Graciela de Sola's *Julio Cortazar y el hombre nuevo*, published in Buenos Aires, and of *El léxico de Camilo Jose Cela*, published in Madrid, by Sara Suarez Solis. Are these two contemporary Hispanicists, as well as the distressingly edible navigator and the 17th-century dramatist and historian, all necessarily related to or "connected with" Aunt Ellie and her status-hungry clan?

The far-flung de Sola family in Holland, England, the West Indies, Latin America, Canada, and the United States can indeed prove its descent from a certain Carlos de Sola, an 18th-century *converso* of unknown parentage who escaped from the Portuguese Inquisition to London where he reverted to Judaism. But several generations later some of his descendants began to claim that he in turn was a direct or collateral descendant of all the other medieval Spanish and Portuguese de Solas of any distinction whose names caught their fancy—although there is no proof that all these other de Solas are necessarily related to each other. Some of the misunderstanding may stem from the fact that the *converso*, as Birmingham correctly notes, "felt the need to advertise his new faith . . . and often selected the name of a Catholic saint." There was a good reason for this: a *converso* was obliged to abandon his Jewish name when he accepted baptism. He was then generally given the name of the saint of the day of his conversion and would assume, at the same time, the family name of the Christian godfather who thus adopted him. This last custom, in particular, has led to a great deal of confusion among historians and genealogists, especially since the descendants of wealthy *conversos* who had aristocratic godfathers have often claimed the latter in good faith as their forebears. Sometimes, however, the godfather of a *converso* was an ecclesiastic or a religious, in which case he would give his godson the family name, such as Santa Maria, Espirito Santo, or de la Cruz, which he himself had adopted "in religion" when he had been ordained or had taken vows.

FINALLY, like most other popular accounts that touch on the history of the Jews in medieval Spain and Portugal, *The Grandees* has inherited a number of romantic illusions regarding the privileged status of Jews under the Christian kings who ruled over areas reconquered from the Moors. The fact is that under Arab rule the Jews of Iberia had enjoyed a privileged position as middle-men, interpreters, administrators, and scientists; under Christian rulers, individual Jews still managed to prosper, but the general condition of the Jews continued to deteriorate until the final expulsion by Ferdinand and Isabella.* But then, as should be by now apparent, one cannot look to *The Grandees* for historical accuracy. What one *will* find—and this I say in the book's favor—is a very readable compendium of facts (and fantasies) concerning a little-known area of America's social *petite histoire*. As for the Sephardic elite, it continues to consist, as always, of the great names of the Sephardic tradition, those of men of learning, philosophers, physicians, scientists, theologians, poets, Talmudists, and Kabbalists who flourished in Spain mainly during the years of Moorish rule. Their descendants, if any still bear their names, might now be found among the offspring of those Jews who fled from Spain to Morocco and to the various lands that were part of the Ottoman Empire; they are not to be found among the descendants of those Jews who in the 17th, 18th, and early 19th centuries, drifted to New York and Newport via Brazil, Holland, the West Indies, or England; and most certainly, except perhaps through later marriages, not among the latter's descendants.

* It should not pass unremarked that even Alfonso the Wise of Castille and Leon (1252-84), who is always being cited, and by Birmingham as well, for his generous patronage of Jewish astronomers, mathematicians, cartographers, and scientific translators, allowed those Jews whom he gathered at his court special privileges only because their skills might serve his dynastic ambitions. The majority of the Jews of Aragon, however, best knew him as the monarch who imposed severe limitations on their freedom.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New from Yale

George Steiner

In Bluebeard's Castle *Some Notes Towards the Redefinition of Culture* **by George Steiner**

Nostalgia for barbarism can grow inside high civilization. It is not, perhaps, the absence of heaven so much as that of hell which a secular culture finds intolerable. A post-culture is one that has learned how to build 'hells' on earth, in politics, in the economic process. What remains of western civilization now stands at the seventh and last door in Bluebeard's Castle. Will it open that door, and what lies beyond? These are some of the themes treated in this book, which is at once a philosophic argument and an act of intense vision. $5.95

Ronald Paulson

Hogarth: His Life, Art and Times **by Ronald Paulson**

With the same kind of sensitive scholarship he displayed in *Hogarth's Graphic Works,* Mr. Paulson offers the first accurate and complete biography of the artist. Utilizing all relevant contemporary records and documents to illuminate certain hitherto unexplored areas, the author points out the parallels between Hogarth's life and his engravings and paintings. The book includes reproductions of many works by Hogarth (four in full color) and several by his predecessors and contemporaries—over three hundred illustrations in all.

Published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art (London) Ltd. two volumes — the set $40.00

Albert J. Reiss

The Police and the Public **by Albert J. Reiss, Jr.**

Riding in patrol cars in Detroit, walking the beat with Chicago policemen, observing the scene in Boston police stations, and sitting in the police communications center in Washington, sociologist Reiss studies the person-to-person interactions of police and public. The behavior of policemen, Reiss concludes, is no more civil or humane than that of the population they serve—nor can we expect it to be. To make substantial improvements in police behavior, we must become serious in the attempt to create a more civil society.

Terry Lectures $7.95

Vincent Scully

The Shingle Style and the Stick Style *Architectural Theory and Design from Richardson to the Origins of Wright*

Revised edition **by Vincent Scully, Jr.**

As the definitive study of the complex inspirations and cultural influences that were fused in the Shingle Style of wooden suburban and resort buildings of the period 1872 to 1889, Mr. Scully's book has received much critical acclaim. An analysis of the Colonial Revival is central to the work, which is now enhanced by the addition of an extensive related chapter on the Stick Style of the mid-century. A new preface has been added and the bibliography and footnotes are brought up to date.

Yale Publications in the History of Art, 20 Cloth $15.00 Paper $6.95

A. E. Popham

Catalogue of the Drawings of Parmigianino **by A. E. Popham**

The exquisite drawings of Parmigianino, more widely studied and more frequently reproduced than those of any other Italian artist, are for the first time completely collected and catalogued. Volume one contains the author's introduction in which he seeks to document his attributions of the drawings, the catalogue of more than 800 entries, and three appendixes including a listing of old copies and reproductions of old copies and lost drawings by the artist. The second and third volumes are devoted to almost 1000 illustrations. Mr. Popham, prior to his death served as Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum and was the world's leading authority on both Parmigianino and the painters who lived and worked with him in Parma in the sixteenth century.

Published for the Pierpont Morgan Library three volumes — the set $100.00

from our backlist

John Sloan

John Sloan's Prints *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Etchings, Lithographs, and Posters*

by Peter Morse with a foreword by Jacob Kainen

"John Sloan's prints are not beautiful. Sloan drew lumpy nudes with skins of copper, rowdies, boozers and tired women, but he drew them with love as well as laughter, and made caustic, informative comments on each picture, all of which Peter Morse has collected with great skill. Sloan used his gift — a rare combination of satire and compassion — to portray better than any artist the life of urban America. A most important, moving book." — Peter S. Prescott, *Look.*

"A delight . . . a landmark in the presentation of the materials of American art history."
—David W. Scott, National Gallery of Art $50.00

Yale University Press *New Haven and London in Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Oxford University Press

English History

A SURVEY

By **SIR GEORGE CLARK.** "This is the work of a master, with all the illuminating insights and wisdom from a lifetime's practical experience and reflection." – A. L. ROWSE, *Sunday Telegraph* (London). *15 maps.* $10.00

A Discovery of Cinema

By **THOROLD DICKINSON.** A unique and seasoned overview of the film's development as an international art medium, technology, and industry – from 1895 to 1970. "Delightfully fresh and original. . . . a joy to come upon." – H. G. WEINBERG, *Take One.*

More than 140 photographs. $8.50

The Revival of American Socialism

SELECTED PAPERS OF THE SOCIALIST SCHOLARS CONFERENCE

Edited by **GEORGE FISCHER.** The contributors to this volume explore such topics as recent trends in American society, a white-collar "new working class," and aspects of neo-Marxism.

Cloth, $10.50. *A Galaxy Book,* GB 349, *paper,* $3.50

Children in Urban Society

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA

By **JOSEPH M. HAWES.** Urban delinquency as Americans of the last century saw it, and society's attempts to cope with this persistent problem. *(Urban Life in America series.)* $8.50

This Sacred Trust

AMERICAN NATIONALITY, 1798-1898

By **PAUL C. NAGEL.** This vivid portrait of 19th-century America – a timely contribution to current re-examination of values – explores the growth of nationalism in its social, cultural and political implications. $9.50

A Reading of Stephen Crane

By **MARSTON LA FRANCE.** "Brilliant, perceptive, and most important. . . . At last someone has cut through the accumulated errors of 'received critical doctrine' and revealed what Crane was really doing."

– WILL C. JUMPER, *Iowa State University* $9.50

Blindness and Insight

ESSAYS IN THE RHETORIC OF CONTEMPORARY CRITICISM

By **PAUL DE MAN.** These nine interpretive essays discuss recurrent patterns in contemporary European criticism, with emphasis on such writers as Ludwig Binswanger, Georges Poulet, Georg Lukács, and Jacques Derrida. $6.95

The Journal and Major Essays of John Woolman

Edited by **PHILLIPS P. MOULTON.** The first accurate edition of the Quaker minister's works. "I find more wisdom [in Woolman's] pages than in any other book written since the days of the apostles." – RALPH WALDO EMERSON. "A superb edition of the *Journal* and three other essays."

– DR. EDWIN B. BRONNER $10.50

Literary Style

A SYMPOSIUM

Edited by **SEYMOUR CHATMAN.** "A very impressive collection of essays on stylistics [that] conveys in a remarkable way some of the most exciting recent thinking on the subject with a solid report of what we have so far accomplished." – MORTON W. BLOOMFIELD, *Harvard University*

Cloth, $12.50. *Paper,* $3.50

Surviving the Future

By **ARNOLD TOYNBEE.** Speaking directly to young people, Mr. Toynbee gives his views on the world's most pressing problems, and on how a knowledge of the past can be a guide to the future. $5.95

The Oxford Book of Invertebrates

By **DAVID NICHOLS** *and* **JOHN COOKE,** *illustrated by* **DEREK WHITELEY.** More than 600 of the common large invertebrates – animals without backbones – drawn from life in magnificent color and detail and described in an adjacent text. *96 full-color plates.* $11.00

The Speaking Tree

A STUDY OF INDIAN CULTURE AND SOCIETY

By **RICHARD LANNOY.** India's artistic and social development, its inherent qualities and way of life, its achievements through the ages, and its current dilemmas are thoroughly explored in this wide-ranging book. *24 halftones.* $15.00

At all bookstores

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
200 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lessons & Judgments

KENT STATE: WHAT HAPPENED AND WHY. By JAMES A. MICHENER. *Random House. 599 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by STANLEY M. ELKINS

BASED on exhaustive local interviews and minutest scrutiny of all available evidence, *Kent State* was intended to be—and in a way perhaps is—the definitive account of those events which led directly to the deaths by shooting of four students on Monday, May 4, 1970. The reporting is scrupulous, comprehensive, and in many respects exemplary. James Michener uses the Kent State affair, moreover, to assess a state of social conflict all over America. He appears to recognize that the passions of Kent State do not quite make sense when the affair is read primarily as a protest against Vietnam, even though the Cambodia announcement certainly was the occasion, here as at countless other places of learning, for eruptions. The lines, such as they were, that still divided people in the spring of 1970 with regard to the war were in no meaningful sense the lines that divided them over Kent State, either in the town of Kent, Ohio, or in the country at large. Some have recently argued that the "generation gap" is not the "real" gap in this society. Maybe not, but it's certainly one of the gaps, and always has been; Michener, being of a certain age, has the rough common sense to see this as somehow a major piece in his puzzle.

The book's reception so far, however, has been characterized by a curious malaise. No commentator seems to find it very satisfying, but no two seem able to agree as to just why. Some see in it, or think they see, evidences of social bias, though the effort, at least, that Michener has made to be even-handed is generally recognized. I think myself that the even-handedness ought to be conceded. Indeed, I think that is precisely the problem. The driving urge to be "fair" and conciliatory has tied up all Michener's analytical energies. There is, to be sure, "understanding" in abundance, but somehow it's never quite the kind we need. Nor is Michener unwilling to pass out judgments—and that, too, even-handedly. But they're too even-handed; the judgments have the effect of canceling one another out, leaving everyone disgruntled, all for different reasons.

A hard result, when that is all a man gets for his labors, especially when his ultimate aim is reconciliation. Nor does reconciliation, after Kent State, seem oversimplified as an objective; I, for one, am willing to take it as a kind of first principle for everything that is still worth saying on the subject. This means I am not primarily interested in deciding whether *Kent State* is a good or a bad book. It is a question, rather, of what there is about this book that virtually guarantees, if we were to try deriving formulas from its precepts, that no reconciliation will ever occur.

An essential part of the context in which the book was written is that it was commissioned by *Reader's Digest*. That doesn't mean, I hasten to add, what it might seem to mean. Nowhere might a more direct interest in genuine reconciliation be found than under just such auspices; there was as good a chance here as anywhere to bring it off, given good will and the right man with full sanction to go ahead and tell the truth as he saw it. Let's concede the good will, and on the face of it they did pick the right man. A popular novelist, an experienced reporter, and a perennially sympathetic observer of the young, James Michener would make every effort to see all sides. If there were lessons to be learned—and by definition there certainly were—about the new lifestyles and the behavior, violent and otherwise, of the college generation, no one's credentials for the touchy job of pointing them out should have been in better order than Michener's. If there was anyone around whom the widest sector of the American public could still trust, who but the creator of Nellie Forbush?

And for Michener himself it must have been seen as a splendid opportunity. He might give the country a fair and reasonable account of an event that had generated almost as many lies, fantastic rumors, and wild speculations as John Kennedy's assassination. Not only would he be able, through a credibility earned over many years, to schoolmaster Middle America in a gentle but salutary way (he would do his best to distinguish between justified public hostility to student hooliganism and the wildly irrational popular reaction that followed the Kent State shootings), but he might even succeed in playing mediator between the generations. The intention was an honorable one, doing credit both to *Reader's Digest* and to James Michener. Nevertheless these very sanctions, their very spaciousness and generosity, appear to have done Michener in. Again and again they have blurred his perceptions and dulled his capacity not for understanding or for making judgments, but for selectivity: for selective understanding and selective judgment.

MICHENER'S book is organized as a day-by-day account beginning with the vandalizing of the stores in downtown Kent on Friday evening and carrying the reader through all the key occurrences up to the actual shootings by the National

STANLEY M. ELKINS, *who teaches at Smith College, is the author of* Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Guard on Monday. The final chapters discuss the responses of the town of Kent and the nation at large to the killings, and they dispense some gratuitous and rather dithering advice on the management of campus violence. Along the way we get profiles of all the major characters plus glimpses of a host of minor ones, and Michener takes the occasion to discourse on Kent State's background of student militancy, the often bitter clash between student and town life-styles (a number of rather colorful communes had developed around the university), and the various doings of the hard-cores. There is the full cast of SDS types, including such visiting moguls as Bernardine Dohrn, Kathy Boudin, and Mark Rudd. The university experiences most of the traumas already undergone by its more visible counterparts elsewhere: black agitation, a free- (or foul-) speech campaign, and a sit-in—or rather a lock-in—that left many students convinced that the administration had no real concern for due process in matters of student rights.

The hard-core radicals seem to be the one group that stands a bit outside Michener's benign perimeter of understanding; he is never quite sure what to do with them or how they fit. He shows, convincingly enough, that there was such a group at Kent State and that they were fully determined to close the place down. But Michener can never quite make the connection—if there is one—between the known campus radicals and the trashing, burning, and rioting that led to Monday's shootings. There are sinister hints about external forces. But though we keep seeing strangers on the fringes of the various crowds, sometimes in Che Guevara costumes (that should peg them, shouldn't it?), no one is ever clearly identified as an "outside agitator" exercising any real or active leadership. And the burning of the ROTC building on Saturday—the one act that justified bringing the National Guard to the campus—was hardly the work of "professional revolutionaries." It was the work of youngsters who seem never to have burned anything before in their lives, and a saturnalia of incompetence all around. Here they were, fumbling away for two hours before they could get the ramshackle wooden building ablaze, with the campus police, who could easily have sent them packing, nowhere in sight.

A point that Michener does make with considerable effect is that out of the four students who were killed and the one who was seriously wounded, only one approached even vaguely the category of "radical," and none had any real connection with the organized radical movement on campus. His picture of these five young people is sympathetic and moving. Whether or not they qualified as a random sample of the Kent State student body, they are certainly familiar enough as personalities on any American campus. Concerned, angered, and confused by the presence of the National Guard on their campus, they had attended a mass meeting called for Monday noon and had refused to disperse when ordered to do so. None was involved in the trashings of Friday night or the burning of the ROTC building on Saturday. They were most emphatically not, as so many frightened and maddened Americans said afterward, a bunch of radical brats who got what was coming to them.

But what is missing? Zealous and sympathetic reporting seems to be no guarantee of perceiving the interconnectedness of things. One curious blind spot here, I think, is that Michener lacks a sense of connoisseurship with regard to competence. Having no real appreciation for the nice functional distinctions between skill and bungling, and how much they can matter in a fluid social situation, means a poorly developed eye for those actions which are operative in some ratio to intention, and for those which are gratuitous, irresponsible, and wasteful. Fellow-feeling may go a long way to cover for that deficiency, but it can't quite stand as an equivalent.

Michener makes every effort to understand—and to make us understand—the conflicting pressures on the various parties. On the mayor of Kent, who asked for the Guard; on Governor Rhodes, who was determined to keep the campus open; on Kent State's president, Robert White, who returned from a weekend absence to find state authorities in charge of his university; on the two generals who accompanied the troops on their anomalous mission to Kent State; and even on the Guardsmen who did the actual shooting. Michener does his best to see things exactly as the participants themselves must have seen them, and to reenact the steady buildup of fear, tension, and mad frustration that led to the final climax. Nobody is condemned out of hand.

But why not? A serious act was performed here; a serious claim is being made on our attention, which presumably warrants the time and effort spent in preparing a very long book on a very serious subject, death. Michener concludes that it was "deplorable and tragic," but that it was "not murder." I hope we are not yet at the point where the public definition of that question must be left to the James Micheners, or even to the William Scrantons. If authority in this society is still legitimately located where we always presumed it was, then that is for a duly constituted and duly sanctioned tribunal—a military court-martial or a federal grand jury—to decide. This has not been done, and from all indications it isn't likely to be. And until this failure is identified for what it is, and the issues of social cohesion and morality connected with it seen for what they are, we are not going to learn any lessons from Kent State. The principal issue here—as with the Calley case and the Chicago Panther killings—has to do with the standards whereby public authority, legal and moral, holds men personally accountable for their actions. That imperative, stated loud and clear with everybody listening, would be worth more to the audience Michener wants to reach than all his generalized understanding and even-handed judgments put together.

Michener's account of the Guard's movements from the time General Canterbury ordered them to break up the mass meeting to the point where they opened fire makes it abundantly clear that the troops themselves were never in any immediate danger. The num-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW BOOKS FROM

Edward Albee

ALL OVER. "Edward Albee's most important play yet. Lovely, poignant and deeply felt."—*Clive Barnes* $5.95

Donald Barr

WHO PUSHED HUMPTY DUMPTY? *Dilemmas in American Education Today,* by the witty and provocative headmaster of New York's internationally famous Dalton School. $10

John Hollander

THE NIGHT MIRROR. "The poetry of John Hollander — heretofore protean, uneasy, erudite, troubled by knowing more than it could say — emerges in *The Night Mirror* as one of the wholly necessary voices of its generation."—*Harold Bloom* Paperback, $3.95

Marvin Bell

THE ESCAPE INTO YOU. *A sequence of poems* by the author of the Lamont Poetry Selection for 1969, *A Probable Volume of Dreams.* Paperback, $3.95

Robert Watson

CHRISTMAS IN LAS VEGAS. A new book of poems by the author of *A Paper Horse* and *Advantages of Dark.* Paperback, $3.95

Janet Flanner

PARIS JOURNAL, Volume II, 1965-1971. *Glenway Wescott* said of Volume I, "Janet Flanner is the foremost remaining expatriate of the Twenties, still over there, and her *Paris Journal* incomparably conveys the experience of living in France, of loving France, in this changeable and fateful time. . . ." $12.50

Brock Brower

THE LATE GREAT CREATURE. In his brilliant, dazzling new novel Brock Brower has taken the horror film as a metaphor for the American situation, recycling pop material and making it part of our literature. $6.95

Enid Starkie

FLAUBERT THE MASTER. The second, concluding volume of what will almost certainly stand as the definitive work on Flaubert and his art. Illustrated $10

Now at your bookstore

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ber of students anywhere near them was very small; the rock-throwing was relatively limited (only one Guardsman was injured); and the "sniper" story was utterly without foundation. The troops' main problem was actually that the students were too dispersed to be effectively managed, either by tear gas or by direct bodily force. But nothing that happened on the field could be offered as a rational basis for what followed. Instead of completing a withdrawal that was unhampered by the students, a group of Guardsmen suddenly wheeled about in unison and opened fire—lethal and murderous fire, not in the air but admittedly point-blank—on a scattered crowd the great bulk of whom were well beyond rock-throwing range. One youth, Jeff Miller—long hair, headband, probably shouting epithets—had his head blown apart by a bullet received full in the face. On the one hand, eighty yards is a long distance to throw a rock; on the other, anyone who has handled an M-1 knows that with a rifle at that range it's pretty hard to miss what you're aiming at.

It should go without saying that the question of "competence" in a given setting hardly embraces all the questions of morality which may arise in that setting. But it is at least related, and is, I think, a good place to begin if standards of performance in a role which a man marks out for himself, or has marked out for him, are to have any bearing on the question of whether he performs it responsibly.

Take the president of Kent State University, Robert I. White. White happened to be off at a meeting of educators in Iowa City when he got news of the burning of the ROTC building. How does a university president behave in such circumstances, knowing from the experience of others if not from his own that the chances of bloodshed in a riotous campus situation will be considerably less as long as he can remain in personal charge of it than when it is turned over completely to outside authority? White seems to have had some inkling of this. But his plane was grounded because of bad weather. Would it be worthwhile to get a car and start for Kent as fast as it would take him? Perhaps not; it's a pretty long trip. But why wasn't he on the phone—conferring with the mayor, giving instructions to his vice-presidents, and so on—all through Saturday night? Why didn't he insist on talking to the Governor, especially after the Guard was called, and on making every effort to keep Rhodes from taking total charge? If other institutional heads are to learn from this, a scorecard has to be made up for White. A sorry collapse of executive responsibility: should not Michener have said so?

Or Governor Rhodes. What does his scorecard on competence show? It shows a lot, but two things in particular. One is his taking over the operation without knowing the first thing about universities or how they function, and deliberately excluding the administrative officers who had been acting in White's absence. The other is shooting off his mouth in front of reporters at the most sensitive possible moment. Rhodes was running for reelection. He lost, though it seems not for those reasons. He should have, and Michener should have said so.

Or the commanding general, Robert Canterbury. We needn't ask how this man got to be a general; we can even take as given (though only for the sake of the argument) that Ohio was one of only two states that customarily permitted the use of loaded rifles in riot control. But what competent military officer would lead a group of tense, frightened troops with limited training into a combat situation—to say nothing of one consisting only of unarmed minors—with absolutely no check on fire discipline? Why no instructions not to load except under orders? For that matter, the basic weapon was intended to be tear gas; who was responsible for running out of it? Actually Canterbury shows at his worst *after* the firing, when the students became hysterical—as well they might—and refused to leave the hill. He thereupon insisted that if they were not off in five minutes he'd move the troops back out against them. Malice? Military brutality? "Military" indeed. I'd say he panicked and froze with the simplest formula he knew, which was a lot more dangerous for the cause of life and limb than a dim view of longhairs. Canterbury could not respond to the fact that his men had just shot fifteen students and killed four, or to the probability that if the faculty had not persuaded the rest to leave they might have ended up killing who knows how many more. A hideous bungling business from first to last, and Michener should have said so.

And finally, the troops themselves. As long as there remains any ground for suspicion that these men consciously intended in advance to do what they did—and there are such grounds—then this constitutes a question that has to be pursued until settled once and for all. Not unofficially, but officially. Why can't Michener, without equivocating, say so?

So here is one lesson of Kent State that this book falls well short of teaching, and this is one major reason why the reconciliation we want is not to be had on Michener's terms. When authority performs in the way it did here, the students of Kent State and all the rest of us have a good warrant for regarding it with contempt. Authority is legitimate when it meets certain tests. One test—admittedly a circular one—is that it be generally recognized and accepted as such. But it won't be so recognized without the other test, which is that the officials of duly constituted authority, and all who act in its name, be held strictly accountable for what they do. If you are going to be a conservative here, Michener should have told John Middle America, be a real one. And the same thing might have been said last month to the Attorney-General.

But that's only one condition of reconciliation, albeit a major one, assuming reconciliation to be desirable. (And remember, the whole argument is off if it isn't.) The other lesson of Kent State is infinitely more difficult to define, let alone deal with. It has to do with the blind fury of the Kent townspeople, and of people all across the country, not at the killings but at the students. Michen-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Intellectual Digest Charter Invitation

The impulse that made you read on from a headline printed backwards reveals one of two characteristics:

1. You've got one of those acrobatic minds capable of grasping things not just in normal fashion, but from unusual perspectives as well. (And you *recognize a bargain when you see it.*) OR/AND . . .

2. You've got a lively sense of curiosity. (And you *recognize a bargain when you see it.*)

If your sense of perspective and curiosity extends to keeping up with what's being written and argued in the nation's leading journals of politics, foreign affairs, medicine, sociology, philosophy, the sciences, business, the arts . . .

And if your sense of thrift likes not only saving money, but time . . . welcome to INTELLECTUAL DIGEST, the new magazine that helps you do both. We invite you to become a Charter Subscriber to INTELLECTUAL DIGEST and thereby to enjoy certain advantages and privileges—among others, *having a look at your first issue free, and if you like it, saving half on your subscription.*

A digest for people with brains — but never enough time to keep up with all the new ideas shaping our society.

The number of publications devoted to concerns of the mind has proliferated astonishingly in recent years. Our editors plow through some 300 of these publications, seeking the freshest thinking, the liveliest writing of today. Writing chosen for its bite, its courage, its conviction. We screen out the irrelevant. When it seems advisable, we edit — but only in collaboration with the original author so as to avoid any chance of dilution or distortion.

Some of the journals we cull from are probably familiar to you through personal experience or by reputation: SATURDAY REVIEW. DAEDALUS. COMMENTARY. ENCOUNTER. COMMONWEAL. DISSENT. FOREIGN AFFAIRS. PARIS REVIEW.

Others may be new to you unless you are involved in the professions they serve: THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGIST. THE NEW SCIENTIST. PHYSICS TODAY. ANNALS OF INTERNAL MEDICINE.

Taken all together, these periodicals represent the finest in contemporary reportage, and reflect every shade of political opinion — left, middle, right. (Given the number and variety of our sources, it could not be otherwise: 34 journals of opinion; 27 magazines of the arts; 136 scientific journals; 38 literary magazines; 67 social science periodicals!)

Some brief excerpts from recent articles in INTELLECTUAL DIGEST

PROMISCUITY — from *Dissent;* Jesse R. Pitts on hippie life: "All the evidence points to a relatively low rate of sexual activity, considering the lack of moral censure and the ready opportunities; the levels are certainly well below those entertained by 'square' fantasies. There are known cases of beautiful girls having lived many months in hippie communities and remaining virgins."

ANARCHY — from *Public Interest;* Robert A. Nisbet on the decline of authority: "Boredom is one of the least understood, least appreciated forces in human history. A few years ago, the scientist Harlow Shapley listed boredom as third among the five principal causes of world destruction. Today it might seriously be considered first."

ALIENATION — from his book, *New Reformation: Notes of a Neolithic Conservative,* Paul Goodman on higher education: "Many explanations are given for the rebellion in the colleges and high schools — the students demand Student Power, blacks want community control, and administrators say they need more money: but nobody wants to suggest that maybe so much schooling for so many is not a good idea. In my opinion, the majority of so-called students in college and high schools do not want to be there and ought not to be."

You'll find, also, several books excerpted in each issue, as well as three bound-in newsletters (special reports on the arts, science, social science and education).

Because INTELLECTUAL DIGEST is new in premise and concept, we will not ask you to subscribe to it sight unseen. We invite you to become a Charter Subscriber only after you have examined your first issue *free.* If you hate it, no obligation. Just write "cancel" across your bill, and that's that. *The sample issue is yours to keep.*

If, on the other hand, you agree that our premise has merit, your advance reservation on our Charter Roster puts you in a happy position:

YOU SAVE HALF IMMEDIATELY. While others will pay $10 for 12 issues,

Charter Subscribers pay only $5. You get the magazine at half price — an immediate savings of 50%.

PREFERENTIAL RATES IN PERPETUITY. Charter Subscribers are *guaranteed* of always receiving the lowest possible rate, no matter what price increases may be required — on all renewals and gifts.

Just as the magazines we cull from are limited in circulation, so must we be, and in fairness to all, *Charter Subscription reservations can be honored only on a first-come, first-served basis.* To avoid disappointment, it might be wise to send for your complimentary copy now. All the more so since you'll have plenty of time after the issue arrives to come to a final decision about subscribing.

INTELLECTUAL DIGEST
P.O. Box 2986
Boulder, Colorado 80302

Please send me my complimentary issue of INTELLECTUAL DIGEST and enter my charter half-price subscription for eleven additional issues at the rate of only $5 (a total savings of 50% on the regular $10 price). I understand I may cancel within 14 days after receiving my complimentary issue if I am not fully satisfied.

☐ Bill me ☐ $5 enclosed

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

CITY.....

STATE.....ZIP.....

Add 50¢ for Canada and $2 for Foreign. 6173

Order your complimentary issue now

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

er's way of handling this is to tell them that these students—certainly the ones who were killed—were for the most part decent and essentially stable young people, and that America should be ashamed of itself. I quite agree. But the problem is one that goes beyond Kent State and beyond this kind of exorcism.

GENERATIONAL tensions have always operated as a special kind of variable in American culture. Another such variable has been a chronic strain of anti-institutionalism that keeps bubbling up from all levels, especially in times of social malaise, and to which few of any age are really immune. But the impulse is expressed unevenly; it becomes less pure as time goes on, inasmuch as we find the custodianship of what institutional arrangements we have tending willy-nilly to fall into our hands—though with less than adequate ideological and psychological preparation—as we get older. At any rate, the intersecting and exacerbation of these perennial tendencies, from a number of causes, is what has been embroiling us for the past several years. And throughout it all, a self-righteous middle and upper-middle class (all ages) have as usual been doing most of the talking, not so much about society's abuses as about each other, and mostly in recrimination. Much has been said with words, but much more has been said in ways other than with words.

The responses to Kent State were those of prepared minds—well prepared—in circumstances that add up to a real problem in sociology. Michener recognizes that it has something to do with "the counter-culture" and deviant styles of dress and behavior. The solution, he would like to say, is tolerance, forbearance, and understanding all around. But of exactly what? What were the social mechanisms involved in this response, and how does one account for them?

Let's make it hopelessly simple, and keep it to matters of appearance and dress. Rule out sex and drugs for the immediate purpose, that being the less visible side, and assume that visibility is everything. What we have left is still one of the profoundest phenomena of social existence, ritual behavior. The enormous importance, indeed the indispensability, of ritual behavior in relation to the morale and solidarity of any social unit is a matter upon which social scientists can usually be roused to something like real eloquence. Ceremonial reaffirmations of social cohesion—funerals (Durkheim's famous example), commencements, applauding at the theater, and so on—occupy much more of our energies than we realize. And we know by instinct that dress and get-up, simply from the extraordinary amount of attention given to it, constitutes one of the most precise forms of ritual behavior ever devised.

By the same token, *deviant* ritual behavior is in effect a ritual assault on communal beliefs, associative standards, and group solidarity, and is instantly reponded to as such with various forms of resistance. Something of the sort, in relatively harmless microcosm, happens every time Junior comes home these days with hair down to his shoulder-blades, or when he won't go out to dinner with us or call on his grandparents in anything but a dirty T-shirt. The occasion seldom fails to be one of great symbolic importance. Nobody is fooled about that, whatever the settlement, and a settlement there must almost always be. But to be real, it must be in some way not imposed but negotiated, and that is where our lesson may lie. A settlement must among other things redefine ritual meanings, as well as establish the point at which Dad can stop protesting—ritually—to the rest of the world: "I know what you're thinking, but the way he looks doesn't mean what you think it means." Somehow the cost in humiliation and sheer consumption of energy has to be recognized here as worth relieving.

But generalizing this problem to the entire American scene, and making it one of reconciliation, may be another matter. Making war is easy; it's making peace that is hard, especially if the war is of a sort neither side can or should win. Let us eavesdrop on another of Michener's characters, a graduate instructor at Kent State named Steve Sharoff. "If you demand that I give up the life style I have evolved . . . I mean the music and the hair and modern dress and the new freedom . . . well, you have to do one of two things with me. Either lock me up for life or shoot me dead in the street." Having it put in that way, and in view of the inspired resemblance to Patrick Henry, we might suppose that Middle America, or the college hierarchies throughout the country, or the thousands of Ohio parents who wrote to President White about things at Kent State, or for that matter any red-blooded American, should logically be prepared to let Mr. Sharoff live his life the way he chooses. But they may not. They may take his terms for something other than peace terms; they may even think—whether mistakenly I can't in this case say—that being left alone, with nobody watching or listening, is the last thing he really wants.

But back to generalization, which is safer: what was the original ritual content of this "style"? What does the symbolic language say to Middle America, and how wrongly does Middle America read it? There is something in it about "radical revolution," about turning everybody's standards and institutions upside down. Another message seems to be one of elitist contempt: the common herd of our great heartland, nothing if not egalitarian, need only look to see itself mocked. Still another is the message of moral superiority: I'm less corrupt, less bound by stupid inhibitions, and less prejudiced than you are. I won't even *look* the way you do. (These items don't all come to quite the same thing, and logically they should be separated, but Middle America has always had difficulty telling them apart.) Then throw in a few of those choice words so potent with symbolic witchery—especially from the girls—together with a dash of the self-righteous outrage typical of counter-culture politics, and the signals are out that someone is looking for trouble.

A fair scattering of our campus population seem willing to confirm that this is exactly what they

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

do mean, and that they are prepared to take the consequences. If so, so be it—no reconciliation there. But their number, I should say, is hardly as great as Middle America thinks. With a far greater number there is a real ambiguity of intent, and a surprising vagueness of discernment as to just where authentic social action begins and where symbolic aggression against the *hoi polloi* and the old folks—some kinds of feedback being gleefully welcomed and less pleasant kinds simply filtered out—leaves off. So there has been genuine shock at the responses, from police actions all the way down to Dad's blowup at Junior. What you're striking at (we now seem to hear him saying) is merely my personal style, and that should be my own business. The answer, perhaps, is that if this is all it amounts to, then a negotiated settlement *is* in sight.

To be sure, there may be some fallacies remaining, and they can't be wholly passed over. He's still engaging in ritual behavior, and ritual, being a matter of group dynamics, is more than an individual affair or one of individual choice. The sanctions for the style with which he confronts the community have themselves come from another community: a college subcommunity, as we know from the days when fraternities were still in style, is in its own way as coercive as any other. So it isn't all that "personal," though seeing it as a matter of group conflict hardly makes it easier to deal with.

STILL, there appear to be mechanisms of accommodation, of silent if not overt negotiation, already functioning in the larger society to assist in the partial absorption of a deviant style into the mainstream of fashion. And fashion does have its mindless—which is to say for our purposes, harmless and peaceable—side. Some of these mechanisms are fairly obvious. One is Madison Avenue itself, where the male models in the ads get hairier every day; another is the entertainment world, where everything is hairier; and there are even the sons of the hardhats and the returning Vietnam veterans. That brawny air-hammer apprentice with his headband may look

New . . . in Natural History

Sea Shells of Tropical West America

MARINE MOLLUSKS FROM BAJA CALIFORNIA TO PERU. Second Edition. *A. Myra Keen.* Illustrated with over 4,000 halftones and 85 color photographs, this revised and expanded classic offers detailed descriptions, synonymies, range data, and notes for some 3,325 species. 1120 pages. $29.50

Flora of the Galápagos Islands

Ira L. Wiggins and Duncan M. Porter. Contributions by 28 specialists. This first complete flora treats every vascular plant known to occur in the archipelago. Over 1,000 detailed line drawings illustrate some 395 taxa. 96 color photographs. 1034 pages. $37.50

Selected Books in Natural History

Flora of Alaska and Neighboring Territories

A MANUAL OF THE VASCULAR PLANTS. *Eric Hultén.* "Monumental as a culmination of research and magnificent as a publication."—*BioScience.* "Probably the most important botanical book which has been published in America in several decades."—*Choice.* Line drawings, range maps, 8 pages in color. $35.00

The Bering Land Bridge

Edited by David M. Hopkins. "Brings together in a remarkably cohesive way the diverse evidence needed to understand why this migration pathway . . . functioned as it did."—*American Scientist.* "Of fundamental importance."—*American Journal of Archaeology.* Illustrated. $18.50

Between Pacific Tides

Fourth Edition. *Edward F. Ricketts and Jack Calvin. Revised by Joel Hedgpeth.* "For beginning marine biology students and amateurs of the tide pools this is *the* book as far as the Pacific Coast is concerned."—*Pacific Discovery.* Revised and expanded. Photographs, drawings, 8 pages in color. $10.95

The North American Deserts

Edmund C. Jaeger. A charming and informative general survey of the five great deserts: the Chihuahuan, Sonoran, Navahoan, Mojavean, and Great Basin. Photographs, maps, drawings. $5.95

Desert Wildflowers

Edmund C. Jaeger. Revised Edition. The most complete field reference ever published on the flora of the Southwestern American deserts. Illustrated. Cloth, $6.95; paper, $2.95

Desert Wildlife

Edmund C. Jaeger. A series of intimate and authentic sketches depicting the lives of animals, reptiles, birds, and insects from the Southwestern deserts. Illustrated. Cloth, $5.95; paper, $2.95

Stanford University Press

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

like Sitting Bull, but he isn't going to blow up the Pentagon. These indications appear superficial, but we wouldn't always have thought so, and the power of symbolism, as I said, works in mysterious ways.

So a détente on aggressive ritual behavior may not be altogether unthinkable, as long as a way can be found to persuade everyone that it wasn't, or at least isn't, so aggressive after all. But this too has to be said ritually, as well as verbally; there are a thousand ways of doing it, even though Coming Clean for Gene might nowadays be carrying the thing too far. But as long as the "liberty or death" terms quoted above remain as a sticking point, as they did as recently as a year ago, a substantial portion of the original ritual meaning will persist ("This is what I think of *your* standards and the rotten world *you've* made"), and there will continue to be consequences. Deep forces will remain afoot, eluding the full control of either confronters or confronted, and that, I believe, is the other lesson of Kent State.

Words

MF. By Anthony Burgess. *Knopf. 242 pp. $5.95.*

West of the Rockies. By Daniel Fuchs. *Knopf. 166 pp. $5.95.*

A Cry of Absence. By Madison Jones. *Crown. 280 pp. $5.95.*

Losing Battles. By Eudora Welty. *Random House. 436 pp. $7.95.*

Birds of America. By Mary McCarthy. *Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 344 pp. $6.95.*

Reviewed by John Thompson

There are times when the print just stays right on the paper, when the words are nothing but words. The metamorphosis, "change of form, structure, or substance, esp. by witchcraft or magic," doesn't work. The novelist makes his gestures and his commands but the spirits refuse to appear, we see the conjurer's wand and his hat, but there is no rabbit. What an embarrassment.

The reviewer especially is then put on the spot, although his predicament is certainly contemptible to the performer, and probably irrelevant to the paying audience. "Mr. Magus, properly costumed and of good bearing, knew his lines well and gestured handsomely, lifting his climactic hand exactly as though it grasped a pair of fuzzy ears; but this observer failed to see a hare dependent." Maybe as Observer seems to suspect, this was due to his own poor vision or his own dull lack of susceptibility. The paying audience applauded. Other reviewers even praised the rabbit itself for its size, liveliness, and one for its sleek brown coat, another for its pure white fur. Uncharmed reviewer is odd man out.

The easiest and probably the most important way to tell others about a novel you have been reading is to take it as real, as a group of real people in a real place performing real actions, even though we may do this in the guise of talking about "characters" and "settings" and "plot." We see what moral pattern unfolds from these persons and places and actions, and we confess whether or not this engages us and requires our approval or disapproval. And perhaps we add a few words, too, in one way or another, about the author's skill, how he compares in this with other writers, and whether or not we think he will do better next time. After all, what the reader of the review wants to know is, need he or need he not actually read the book? Will it keep him awake, and will other people expect him to talk about it?

It is too late for this useful kind of report of the five novels more or less under discussion here. All of them have been for some time candidates for talk at lunch or dinner. All have had rather mixed reviews, including high praise and doubts, all are by successful professional authors, and I myself could bear reading only one of them, which was Mary McCarthy's *Birds of America*. The others were mere words that in the first place I did not like, and as I saw the worlds these words invited me to imagine, I found these worlds not only unrecognizable as any part of our world but dismally unwelcome as imaginary worlds. I cannot say, then, that I really "read" them. I only plowed through, groaning louder all the way. Let me save the other one, *Birds of America*, for last.

Anthony Burgess has written some dozen novels, including the very successful *A Clockwork Orange*, and some half-dozen works on language and literature, among these, *A Shorter Finnegans Wake*. His latest fiction is *MF* (the title represents the initials of the hero Miles Faber, also the current term of Oedipal opprobrium, and doubtless much else as well). It is written in a series of puzzles and jokes and riddles, "crammed with the fracted crackers of useless data," as the hero says, and with literary allusions. The taste for this sort of thing is a special one which I do not happen to share. A small sample should enable you to decide if you like it. This passage is more straightforward and coherent than most, but it displays what I take to be a lack of real observation and feeling—what triteness is more exhausted than scorn of "Madison Avenue"?—and for these the substitution of fancy language and an intrusive modishness as in the "Mailer" gratuity.

> I strolled toward 44th Street, admiring the upward thrust of the masonry which pushed back the night to the limit, the new broom of the Partington Building especially, with the stubbier Penhallow Center and Shillaber Tower flanking it. I admired also the vast induced consumer appetite of this civilization, expressed in its windows and sky signs. It is safer to be bombarded by pleas to eat, drive, play, or wash hair with Goldbow than put Madison Avenue and its tributaries in the service of the ideology of the ruling power. A free society.
>
> The freedom was perhaps expressed in the act of robbery being performed, somewhere near 39th Street, by three shag-haired youths on an old man who had a rabbi-beard. There was no violence, only the urgent frisking for notes and small change of boys desperate for a fix. No kicks from mugging, no leisure to hurt

John Thompson *teaches at the State University of New York at Stony Brook.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

save where resistance was offered. The old man knelt, crying. Some few passers-by watched with little curiosity: this was daily soap-opera of the streets. On the wall behind someone had chalked SCREW MAILER; an indifferent workman up a ladder was chipping out a smashed window in tinkles.

To my ear, this prose has the loud empty noise of rock music, totally derivative of older and more authentic modes, made appealing to some by private reference, by a confidence in stock response, by blurred jokes which only the young can hear. The plot is like that, too, swift, full of spy-story switches and obscurities and puzzles; and obscenities; and I quite believe the hero when he says, "Don't try distilling a message from it, not even an espresso cup of meaningful epitome or a Sambuca glass of abridgement, *con la mosca*." No one could doubt Burgess's extensive cleverness or his fantastic energy, but *MF* is mere public frenzy.

DANIEL FUCHS published three novels about New York in the 30's, then became a screenwriter. This short book, *West of the Rockies*, is his first since those days. It has been praised by good critics.

But how strangely the words and the phrases seem to lie on the page—to me a puzzle more perplexing than Burgess's wild language. I suppose I just haven't the key to it, I lack the responses that would lift the words into life.

I can try to explain it this way. The story is about a time in the late 50's, before Hollywood's decline: a screen star, someone of the stature of Rita Hayworth or Ava Gardner, is on the run to Palm Springs with a small-time agent, kept man of a rich wife. The star is in hysterics and is endangering a major production. Various people try to get her back to work.

Now, as this story makes itself known to us, it is very much a recitation; someone is telling the story, although the narrator is anonymous, omniscient, third-person. This unseen narrator is trying to tell us what it is like to have "star quality," the strange gift or curse that makes famous performers what they are. He cannot show us, he can only talk about it. The narrator rambles, repeats himself, as all of us do when we tell a story—and what I can't make out is the meaning of his style. He speaks in a thesaurus of clichés, but without any apparent irony over it. Perhaps there is irony, and my tone-deafness makes me miss it. And everyone in the story speaks in exactly the same way, piling up the clichés, first the clichés of the little dead metaphors of ordinary speech: "Sticks to me like glue. . . ." "She sits like a bump on a log. . . ." "You can wait until the cows come home. . . ." "She lays there in the dumps, all tuckered out. . . ." "Deep down they know the wife's got nothing but contempt for them, and it's a Donnybrook, cat and dog from the word go. . . ."

Then they speak in another sort of strange jargon, somewhat less credibly perhaps, but again, possibly an accurate rendition of some Hollywood dialect, picked up from the language of "literary" screenplays. Almost, I can hear Bette Davis doing it. "What did they do, send you down to chastise me?"

the first modern, comprehensive,
one-volume history of...

3,000 years of HEBREW LITERATURE

from the earliest time through the 20th century

by NATHANIEL KRAVITZ

"This work is a must for every intelligent man's library."
Rabbi Seymour J. Cohen, Ph.D.,
Past President
Synagogue Council of America

Written for layman and learned alike, this fascinating history captures the sweep and richness of Hebrew literature. Also includes generous excerpts which allow the reader to sample poetry, song, humor, biography, philosophy, religious writings from earliest biblical times to our own day.

650 pages $10.00
(signed, ltd. edition) $25.00

THE SWALLOW PRESS INC.
1139 S. WABASH AVENUE CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60605

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Because I wanted you to come flying to me of your own volition." Just so, the narrator says to us, "She was on the rebound," and then, "He was consistently unfaithful to his young, inexperienced wife." A mother visits her son, and this I swear is an actual quotation, at "his lavish home." There is a further curious effect, which is that nearly everything is said twice. "She was wound up, all excited by the emergency." "Claris was pinned down, . . . he was obliged to stand by. . . . Claris was a minor employee and of no importance. . . ." "He was puzzled, uneasy. . . ." "The producer was gone, no longer standing alongside."

Perhaps this sort of thing does not seem strange to other readers, it may even lead them through the words into a vision of the realities of old Palm Springs and old Hollywood, the ancient scandals and gossip and glamor and squalor. But for me, they were words and phrases, just lingo, they are gone, they have split, they are no longer there.

On *A Cry of Absence,* by Madison Jones, we can be relieved of my verbal schemes, and go on to speak of the actions and moralities presented, almost as if they were real. *A Cry of Absence* has been highly praised by excellent critics: "A masterpiece of fictional art," Allen Tate. It is a story of the South, set in 1957, the days of the first struggles and violence of "The Movement." And, for what it is worth, the novel is carefully and well done, in the manner of the conventional fiction of some years ago. A genteel Southern lady learns that her son has murdered a Negro activist, and finally learns of her own unconscious complicity in the climate that led to the crime. I must admit that I read this book totally without sympathy. The characters seemed to me straight out of the standard Southern stock company; and while I can believe that it would be agonizing to find that a son was a racist murderer, I refuse to believe that such a situation can be made to stand for that long-ago dilemma of the South in general. The family theme does not make the problem human, it makes it sentimental. Perhaps the moral dilemmas of ordinary human beings in social crises, especially those of genteel ladies, can be genuine only when they are so prophetic by so many long years, as in Faulkner and as in Peter Taylor, that we do not in our first reading quite understand them; and such scenes will not do as apologetics long after the special agony has moved to new grounds.

With Eudora Welty's *Losing Battles* I must return to my word-games, since my sternest sense of duty could not get me more than half through this long weird pastoral dream of life in some legendary South of years gone by. And Eudora Welty is such a splendid writer, has been for so long. . . .

On the first page there are eleven figures of speech, each of them just as pretty as a picture. The moon goes down "on flushed cheek. . . . A long thin cloud crossed it slowly, drawing itself out like a name being called. The air changed, as if a mile or so away a wooden door had swung open. . . ." "Then a house appeared on its ridge, like an old man's silver watch pulled once more out of its pocket. . . ." And so on, and on, with real flowers among the flowering prose, "still colorless as faces," until, at the bottom of the page and just over the leaf, "The distant point of the ridge, like the tongue of a calf, put its red lick on the sky."

I quit right there, actually, so there is no point in telling you of the incredible high jinks at the family reunion for Granny Vaughan's ninetieth birthday, as Ella Fay, and Miss Beulah, and Mr. Renfro, and Brother Bethune, and Uncle Percy, and Aunt Nanny, and Uncle Dolphus, Uncle Noah Webster, and finally, brave Jack, home from Parchman Prison, all romp and reminisce chin-deep in pure Mississippi molasses. One can only say that he trusts Eudora Welty has got it out of her system now and can get back to some diet less rich. As Miss Beulah said, "That coconut cake's so tender I advise you to eat it with a spoon."

But I see now, as I come finally to say a few words about Mary McCarthy's *Birds of America,* that my excuses for disliking *A Cry of Absence* and *Losing Battles* were perhaps the wrong ones. Those Southern bouts of nostalgia, in the first place, are not really any more illegitimate as *ex-post-facto* apologetics than is *Birds of America*; nor, in the second place, are they really worse cases of infatuation with the artifacts and foods and personalities of the past. There must be other reasons, then, why I like this book so much and can't stand the others.

I stick to my dislikes, to my claims that Madison Jones should not present the former racial system of the South as cultured and its opponents as boors, and also that Eudora Welty's tapestry of petit point is self-indulgent. But Mary McCarthy presents her American past in the form of a woman, too, a woman committed to the "old" ways—the ancient ways of the 1940's—and from the special vantage point of the family. Her heroine is a twice-divorced harpsichordist seen through the adoring, if ironic, eyes of her teen-age son. Even, this heroine is seen with more admiration, with less historic complication, than is Madison Jones's Hester Glenn. And the opponents of Mary McCarthy's heroine are boors as monstrous, no, even more monstrous, really, than the opponents of Mrs. Glenn. They are American military men and the dread modern bourgeoisie. Although she would not be able to bear the surrounding rhetoric, no doubt Mary McCarthy's Rosamund Brown would have approved, might even have envied, the cry in Eudora Welty's book at the Renfro family reunion, "Ready for your next plateful? Here's the sausage I saved you from last year's hog! Here's some more home-cured ham, make room for more chicken. Elvie! Buttermilk! This time bring him the whole pitcher!"

Rosamund Brown, in her last-ditch Pyrrhic stand for real American cooking, against frozen dinners and "gourmet" cans, stuffs her son with "pot roast and New England boiled dinner and fried chicken and lobsters and scallops and bluefish and mackerel and scalloped oysters and clam chow-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

der. They had Cape Cod Turkey, which some people said was salmon but his mother thought was baked fresh cod with a stuffing. They had codfish cakes and corned beef hash and red flannel hash and chicken hash (three ways), spoon bread and hominy and Rhode Island jonnycake and country sausage with fried apple rings and Brown Betty and Indian pudding and pandowdy and apple pie and cranberry pie. . . ."

The book seems to have become known now as some kind of assault on Tip-Top Bread and on capitalism—so it appeared on one television interview, when the author responded, so it seemed to me, with great charm and with but little sense of what was being done to her; which is exactly how she ought to have responded. That capitalism may have become an evil because it has corrupted the quality of loaves of bread will of course seem to be a frivolous charge to many minds. What is bread? Only the staff of life—and then what else.

But aside from that, two things, the first of them the more important. It is the novelist's job to locate in the actual texture of life, in manners, in taste, in things so small and so important that we others never notice them, the signs of the great drifts of time. These signs Mary McCarthy notes in great detail in bright clear prose, surrounding with these observations this mother and her son, two people I liked very much and found completely credible. Myself a sentimental father of three about the age of her Peter Levi, I take him to be one of the few renditions of "youth" in contemporary fiction that catches their awkward Puritanism and their vulnerable charm.

And another confession of my bias that endears this book to me. Those small things in the drift of time that the novelist must see should of course be "sociologically" true, though, as I was glad to find Mary McCarthy could not, the novelist need not, ought not, explain this. Here, my abrupt opinion is that her sense of things is correct. Modern corporate finance capitalism has deprived us not simply of crunchy crusts, it has deprived us of the baker. The baker was a man who stood sweating before his midnight oven on his own two feet, providing for his family and for his neighborhood on his own terms, as best he could make them. Everywhere—so I say, abruptly—our kind of capitalism is depriving us of men like this, farmer, mechanic, carpenter, shopkeeper, builder, trader, and they will not come back. Only the independent intellectual has been neglected so far. That we have lost the cook in the kitchen is the home sign of it all.

Now this is not new, but I find Mary McCarthy's statement of it poignant. General ideas on "ecology" are already a bore, the corporations have taken them up for their television advertisements. So back to the surface, and then to those last words of *Birds of America,* now become famous. A phantom speaks to the young hero. "Perhaps you have already guessed it. Nature is dead, *mein Kind.*" It seems to me that the three hundred pages of her story have earned Mary McCarthy the right to say that. In the reviewer's sense of it, the shocking thing is that we can take this with such a quibbling, nibbling, ungrateful sort of acceptance, quite as though we could not or need not care.

COMMENTARY REPORTS

Commentary Reports are published by *Commentary* magazine for social scientists, political scientists, educators, librarians, and students.

PRICES: fifty cents each (except where noted) Twenty-five or more: – 20% discount The quantity price applies whether the same or assorted reports are shipped to the same address.

Minimum order: $3.00

POSTAGE is prepaid on orders shipped via Parcel Post or third class mail. Please allow 21 days for normal delivery. For faster service add 75¢ for special handling charges.

Institutions can be billed.

THE CITY

- ☐ THE FAILURE OF URBAN RENEWAL: A Critique and Some Proposals by Herbert J. Gans
- ☐ P. S. 165 by Richard Schickel
- ☐ UP FROM APATHY – THE WOODLAWN EXPERIMENT by Charles E. Silberman
- ☐ POVERTY PROBLEMS by Daniel P. Moynihan
- ☐ THE NEW YORK SCHOOL CRISIS by Maurice J. Goldbloom
- ☐ THE BETRAYAL OF THE AMERICAN CITY by David Danzig & John Feild

WORLD AFFAIRS

- ☐ THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY by John Mander
- ☐ THE FUTURE OF CAPITALISM by Robert L. Heilbroner
- ☐ SOCIALISM AND THE FUTURE by Robert L. Heilbroner
- ☐ THE LEGACY OF CHE GUEVARA by Norman Gall
- ☐ "BONN IS NOT WEIMAR": Reflections on the Radical Right in Germany by Walter Laqueur
- ☐ IMPERIALISM by George Lichtheim. A major study of the crucial problem of our time. Includes the history, theory, and analysis of Imperialism. 60 pages. Only a limited number of issues are available. Includes Study Guide $2.25
- ☐ COMMUNISM IN ASIA by Donald S. Zagoria
- ☐ THE ARAB REFUGEES: A Zionist View by Marie Syrkin
- ☐ THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE by Marjorie Housepian
- ☐ LATIN AMERICA: THE CHURCH MILITANT by Norman Gall
- ☐ THE DOMINICAN REVOLT. Theodore Draper. New 208-page paperback based on his Administration-shaking article in Commentary. $2.50
- ☐ FIVE YEARS OF CASTRO'S CUBA by Theodore Draper
- ☐ CHINA'S STRATEGY: A Critique by Donald S. Zagoria
- ☐ CHINESE VISIONS & AMERICAN POLICIES by Benjamin Schwartz

AMERICAN POLITICS

- ☐ THE QUESTION OF REPRESSION by Walter Goodman
- ☐ THE SHAPE OF AMERICAN POLITICS by Richard N. Goodwin
- ☐ IS ELECTORAL REFORM THE ANSWER? by Alexander M. Bickel
- ☐ THE DEMOCRATS AFTER 1968 by Penn Kemble
- ☐ COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY AMERICA by Robert L. Heilbroner
- ☐ THE FAILURE OF THE WARREN REPORT by Alexander M. Bickel
- ☐ THE PROBLEM OF THE NEW LEFT by Tom Kahn
- ☐ THE NEW LEFT AND ITS LIMITS by Nathan Glazer
- ☐ CONSERVATISM AFTER GOLDWATER by David Danzig
- ☐ BIG BUSINESS & THE DEMOCRATS by David T. Bazelon
- ☐ THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY by Alan F. Westin
- ☐ A GUIDE TO REAGAN COUNTRY: The Political Culture of Southern California by James Q. Wilson
- ☐ THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY A DEFECTIVE INSTITUTION? by Marcus Cunliffe
- ☐ VIETNAM & THE LIBERALS A Symposium $1.00

INTERRELIGIOUS

- ☐ HANNAH ARENDT ON EICHMANN: A Study in the Perversity of Brilliance by Norman Podhoretz
- ☐ VATICAN II & THE JEWS by F. E. Cartus
- ☐ THE JEWS: HOW WE ARE by Milton Himmelfarb
- ☐ AMERICAN CATHOLICISM AFTER THE COUNCIL by Michael Novak
- ☐ CHURCH AND STATE: HOW HIGH A WALL? by Milton Himmelfarb
- ☐ THE TRIAL OF JESUS by Paul Winter

ISSUES OF RACE

- ☐ THE BLACK PANTHERS by Tom Milstein
- ☐ "BLACK POWER" AND COALITION POLITICS by Bayard Rustin
- ☐ THE PRESIDENT & THE NEGRO: THE MOMENT LOST by Daniel P. Moynihan
- ☐ IN DEFENSE OF "BLACK POWER" by David Danzig
- ☐ THE WATTS "MANIFESTO" & THE McCONE REPORT by Bayard Rustin
- ☐ MUTUAL AID AND THE NEGRO by John Slawson
- ☐ THE MEANING OF NEGRO STRATEGY by David Danzig
- ☐ FROM PROTEST TO POLITICS: THE FUTURE OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT by Bayard Rustin
- ☐ THE NEGRO & THE NEW YORK SCHOOLS by Midge Decter
- ☐ THE LESSONS OF THE LONG HOT SUMMER by Bayard Rustin
- ☐ MY NEGRO PROBLEM – AND OURS by Norman Podhoretz

OTHER REPORTS

- ☐ THE NON-GENERATION GAP by S. M. Lipset & Earl Raab
- ☐ THE ORIGINS OF HUMAN BONDS by Selma Fraiberg
- ☐ STUDENT REVOLTS by Walter Laqueur
- ☐ THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF HERBERT MARCUSE by George Kateb
- ☐ THE NEW YORK INTELLECTUALS: A Chronicle & A Critique by Irving Howe $1.00
- ☐ THE POVERTY OF AFFLUENCE by Robert Lekachman
- ☐ QUACKERY IN THE CLASSROOM by Samuel McCracken, professor of literature and the humanities at Reed College. A critical analysis of today's fashionable educational theorists, including John Holt, George Leonard, and George Dennison. The Report exposes the weaknesses in the current demands for radical school reform. Includes Study Guide 75 cents

ORDER FORM

Quantity	TITLE	PRICE

Sub Total _____
Less 20% on orders of 25 or more _____
Total _____

COMMENTARY REPORTS
165 E. 56 ST NEW YORK, N Y. 10022
Minimum order $3.00; institutions or companies can be billed; shipping paid on prepaid orders.

FROM:
NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
ZIP _____

☐ ENTER MY SUBSCRIPTION TO COMMENTARY MAGAZINE for one year, please.
☐ check attached for $10
☐ please bill me

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Oxford

IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO AMERICAN SOCIOLOGY BY

NORMAN BIRNBAUM

Toward a Critical Sociology

Fusing analysis and theoretical reflection, the essays in this volume express a generation's struggle to wrest from the past and send onward a theory of society imbued with historicity and rigorous thought. Devoted in the main to political sociology, they include a notable critique of contemporary Marxism. "[Birnbaum] bridges European and American scholarship with knowledgeable ease. . . . Rarely has so much of importance been said so well." —ALVIN W. GOULDNER, Washington University $10.95

The Crisis of Industrial Society

"It is an important and illuminating study, directed to issues that must greatly concern us." —NOAM CHOMSKY, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "One of the most penetrating, responsible, and civilized analyses to come from the philosophical and political left in many years."—ROBERT A. NISBET, University of California, Riverside. "A profound and powerful book."—ANDREW HACKER, Cornell University Cloth, $5.00. A Galaxy Book, GB 295, paper, $1.75

At all bookstores

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS / New York

Groups in Conflict

JEWS AND BLACKS: THE CLASSIC AMERICAN MINORITIES. By BEN HALPERN. *Herder and Herder. 191 pp. $6.95.*

Reviewed by IRVING HOWE

BEN HALPERN, a gifted intellectual spokesman in this country for Labor Zionism, has written a book that reads with difficulty, sometimes irritation, but is nevertheless important. It makes few concessions to charm and not enough to lucidity, but it shows something rare at this time, perhaps any time: a keen mind actively struggling with difficult problems.

Trying to present a summary of Halpern's thought I find myself most uneasy, since the value of the book rests mostly in its gnarled originality of detail. It might be best just to urge intelligent persons to read the book and let it go at that; nevertheless, let me touch on a few of Halpern's themes and append some criticisms, since my disagreement is almost as large as my admiration.

The Jews and the blacks, writes Halpern, are the two minority groups in America which, despite the official ideology of liberal tolerance, cannot be totally assimilated. The Jews constitute an "ideological minority" splintering the flesh of the dominant culture:

> In all Christian countries, and in America too, the basic Christian tradition which still fundamentally affects attitudes regards the Jews as a people rejected of God . . . they exist as people under a ban: they should not be molested, but they remain essentially alien in the Christian world.

The blacks, by contrast, constitute a "social minority" with a history of severe oppression yet without the burden of a millennia-long stigma. A black's

> appeal to be accepted, even to be loved, is solidly founded on the Christian civilization he shares with white Americans.

For as Halpern argues, the enslaved Negroes became Christians and practically forgot, with rare exceptions, that they were ever anything but American. . . . African reminiscences in the Negro's subculture chiefly served to ease the discomforts his American values imposed upon him. Jewish traditions, no matter how attenuated, never ceased to set Jews at odds with certain basic values shared by all other Americans.

Taking advantage of the official notion of tolerance—a notion, as Halpern emphasizes, that itself assumes tension and even hostility between Jews and Christians—the Jews have achieved notable social and economic successes; yet insofar as they keep alive a distinctive religio-ethnic community, the Jews remain an unassimilable minority, perhaps comfortable but not quite at home, and with the threat of anti-Semitism always in sight if not in use, since it is a threat intrinsic to the Christian-Jewish relationship itself. Having reached, however, a more-or-less halfway point in their drift toward assimilation, the Jews find themselves badly confused. Most of them now live by the values of universalist liberalism, yet in some situations they find themselves wishing, for positive reasons, that they continue to function as a coherent community, while in other situations they find themselves subject to attacks which require the drawing of defense lines by a community concerned first and foremost with its survival.

A serious conflict is thus perceived by Halpern between the need of the Jews to assert their claims as a still-vulnerable and indeed always-vulnerable group, and their pretensions toward a universalist liberalism that transcends petty interests yet, somehow, is linked with a wish to play a "special role" as the white ethnic group most dedicated to actualizing the values of liberalism. Halpern does not go so far as to call for a retreat from universalist liberalism, but certainly implied in his argument is the belief that in the coming period it would be just as well if the American Jews turned back a little toward their own problems, reknitting their internal fabric, regaining the morale that enables self-assertion, and,

IRVING HOWE *is professor of English at Hunter and editor of* Dissent *magazine.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

above all, dropping the guilty notion that a defense of group interest somehow betrays higher values.

While both Jews and blacks have often been supposed to share common interests, the two groups are now embarked, according to Halpern, on radically different strategies vis-à-vis American society. It is partly this difference in strategy, and partly the bruising frictions that Jews and blacks experience when they jostle one another in our cities, which explains the growing conflict between them:

> In his anxiety to be as purely American as the Negro is, the Jew reduces his ideological resistance as nearly as possible to the level of a mythic variant of general American culture. He thus weakens his independent consensus. The Negro, hoping to attain such a rise in status as the Jew has accomplished since immigration, heightens his opposition as nearly as possible to the level of ideology. His new combativeness fosters what Jews avoid: a community organized around its own consensus, independent of the standards of the general American community.

In his partial disenchantment with universalist liberalism as a guideline for Jewish survival, Halpern shows strong sympathies for the efforts of the black community to assert its cultural, even "national" identity. Not that he believes in any utopia of black separatism. But he does appreciate the realism behind the blacks' alleged dismissal of universalist liberalism, and still more, he believes a "nationalist" ideology may enable the blacks to gain the necessary morale and aspirations to individual achievement which would equip them for success in American society.

Halpern also believes that there are and will continue to be conflicts between Jews and blacks. Negotiations between two distinctly-formed minorities are more likely to contain such conflicts within moderate limits than are rhetorical invocations of liberalism which often blur the actual issues. Halpern cites the 1968-69 conflict at Brandeis University where black students demonstrated for a black-studies program that would be autonomous in the sense that both personnel and curriculum would be chosen by the blacks themselves. In responding to this demand, the Jewish members of the faculty, in Halpern's judgment, failed to speak with equal frankness in behalf of Jewish interests. Had they done so, they would have had to insist, at a minimum, that no black-studies program at Brandeis could under any circumstances recruit anti-Semitic personnel or foster an anti-Semitic curriculum.

With a bracing candor Halpern then proceeds to contrast the difficulties faced by blacks and Jews in their current relationship to American society. As for the blacks,

> the great hold of the nationalist mood upon American Negroes today reflects the fact that they are in a quasi-revolution; and collective uprisings always create broad, powerful currents of collective solidarity. What they do not immediately create, except for the cadres of the completely committed activists, are profoundly regenerating values which decisively form identities . . . . The ordinary American Negro could be personally motivated to achieve as the ordinary Jew was only if his whole people, and not an activist minority, became permanently . . . cast in the mold of an ideological minority.

How unlikely such a transformation of the black community is, even its recent turmoil indicates. For the effort to create among the blacks an "ideological minority" along nationalist quasi-Maoist lines —apart from the fact that it has never touched more than a tiny minority—has also resulted in conflicts with white authorities that are simply suicidal. And whatever else, the majority of blacks have no appetite for the fantasy of "revolutionary suicide" with which some Panthers have recently been consoling themselves. On the other hand, any effort to create a black "ideological minority" along more moderate lines seems equally doomed to failure, if only because it would be unable to provide that discharge of collective anger which young blacks strongly need when they consider the humiliation of their people over the last few centuries. Added to all this are objective circumstances to which Halpern does not pay enough atten-

The Jewish Book Club invites you to own . . .

ABBA EBAN'S

$17.50 HISTORY OF THE JEWS

FOR ONLY $5...

When you join The Jewish Book Club and agree to purchase four additional books from the many offered in the next year at reduced member prices.

You'll be able to choose from books by Isaac Bashevis Singer, Elie Wiesel, Saul Bellow, S. Y. Agnon, Chaim Potok . . . and best sellers like The Pledge, Our Crowd, Genesis'48 . . . and valuable reference books too, including The 613 Commandments, Archeology of the Holy Land, Cecil Roth's History of the Jews, The English-Hebrew Dictionary, Art in Israel, etc.

The selections are made by the editors of Commentary magazine.

THE JEWISH BOOK CLUB
165 East 56th Street, New York, New York 10022

☐ Please enroll me as a member of The JEWISH BOOK CLUB and send me Abba Eban's 500-page classic, **MY PEOPLE**, for only $5.00. I agree to buy, in the next year, as few as four of the monthly selections or alternates at the special members' prices. All selections and alternates will be described for me in advance in The Jewish Book News and I may decline them by returning the printed card provided.

After completion of my short trial membership I will be entitled to earn free bonus books.

☐ I am already a member of The Jewish Book Club and would like to have ABBA EBAN'S book for only $5.00. I agree to purchase an **additional** four selections during the coming year.

☐ Check enclosed ☐ Please bill me

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Signature _____

CO

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion—such as the fact that our economy is not nearly as receptive to a minority still largely confined to unskilled labor as it was sixty or seventy years ago. In short, what must be faced is that we will have with us for some time "a black lumpenproletariat of disproportionate size." This deprived and wretched mass, which some sociologists idyllicize as "the culture of poverty," Halpern sees as a possible source of desperado revolutionary outbursts and—especially when it falls under the sway of certain black intellectuals—as a group peculiarly open to anti-Semitic incitement.

As for the Jews, they must now confront a new situation of discomfort, caused in part by the rupture of their friendly relations with the blacks and in part by such political circumstances as a slowly gathering backlash against "too close" a relationship with Israel. How can the Jews cope with these discomforts? Only, says Halpern, if they reexamine their devotion to a universalist liberalism which tends to leave them without defense against close-quarter attacks. And here, if only in passing, a word should be said about some excellent pages in which Halpern destroys the notion that there is in the Jewish religious or historical tradition some incontrovertible bias toward liberalism, let alone radicalism, such as young Jewish leftists claim. The current attachment of American Jews to liberalism is, in part, a watered-down residue of the socialism that East European Jews brought to this country; but Jewish socialism itself, or any other Jewish secular activism, is a very recent development within Jewish history and in fact is a deviation from what had been the major tradition over the centuries, namely, that "the safest Jewish response was to steer clear of *goyish* politics. Like history, politics was a Gentile game." A tradition as rich and tormented as that of the Jews must be seen, in reality, as a complex of linked but competing traditions, so that if one can find within the Jewish past a warrant for *almost* any politics, the intelligent and respectful course is to argue for one's current convictions in terms of their intrinsic merits, without invoking the Prophets, Bar Kokhba, Maimonides, or anyone else.

MY SUMMARY of Halpern's argument has been longer than I intended, but quite as unjust to the frequent richness of his book as I had feared. In any case, a few critical remarks.

The central weakness of *Jews and Blacks* is that it accepts too uncritically the model of the United States as a pluralist consensus of uneasily-balanced religious communities and thereby overestimates the continuing magnitude and significance of Christian-Jewish tensions. Not, of course, that such tensions aren't real enough and pervasive too; nor that they aren't likely to persist as long as Christianity holds to its mythos and the Jews to their refusal. But Halpern doesn't take into sufficient account that the internal corrosion of belief and solidarity he finds among the Jews is also spreading rapidly among the Christians. Even as they adhere to their rituals and symbols, most Christians today are not likely to feel so strongly about the myth of Judas as did Christians at any point in previous Western history. I say this, of course, without being able to offer "proof," but on such matters we really have no choice but to fall back upon our common experience and the impressions we gain from it.

If I am at all correct in these impressions, the disabilities of being an "ideological minority," while still felt, are not nearly so pressing as they have been in the past—just as the advantages of being such a minority are also slipping away. But Halpern does not pay nearly enough attention to that process of creeping skepticism —a skepticism rather weary and passive—which eats into the substance of all religious life and is a major cause for the much-discussed "crisis" of the Christian churches. Consider the new wave of social consciousness among Catholics and Protestants alike: whatever its political value, isn't it clear that many of its adherents are people who have lost the religious substance yet retain a religious yearning? Isn't it clear, as well, that for many of these people, good and sincere as they may be, the religious symbols and vocabularies have become little more than enabling cues for the secular passions which are their real concern? In any case, are we to suppose that either the great mass of drowsy churchgoers or the small minority of aroused dissidents still experience Judeophobia with the vehemence, the fanaticism, that their fathers and grandfathers did?

Saying this could be a dangerous first step toward a dreadful complacence among Jews; but it is not necessarily to suggest that anti-Semitism may not again become a significant problem. For anti-Semitic sentiments seem able to outlive the religious myths which, to some indeterminate extent, are their source. What I am proposing is a partial, but only partial, challenge to the model Halpern seems to have taken over from Will Herberg, the model of a pluralist America whose values are uneasily balanced among, yet largely determined by, the three major churches. It would be foolish to deny the continuing usefulness of this model, but I think it no longer accounts for significant portions of American experience, even of religious or quasi-religious experience. For while it's true, as Halpern says, that we are still very far from the liberal utopia of a society that has achieved neutrality toward religion, what we are confronting is the spread of skepticism, even nihilism, within the existing religious institutions. That skepticism didn't, of course, start yesterday, but it does seem in recent years to have become intensified. The result is that the impact of the traditional Christian phobia concerning the Jews as a pariah people is likely to weaken. Ordinary Jews sense this—which may be a reason for that "complacence" which writers so frequently decry.

In the midst of this growth of skepticism, and perhaps because of it, there appear among the young, both Jewish and Christian, some fervent but ill-founded religious tendencies, sectarian impulses battling against fixed theologies and institutions, exotic syncretisms refusing traditional demarcations, antinomian and even Sabbatian communities transposing religious desire into vocabularies of secular

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

salvation. Say what you wish about these religious offshoots, the one thing not likely to be true of them is that they will perpetuate traditional Christian myths about the Jews.

On the other hand, in writing about the blacks, Halpern gravely underestimates the sheer irrational power of color prejudice. True, Negroes as Christians don't suffer the status of religious pariah in the way Jews have, and to some extent still do, but Negroes suffer the effects of another phobia so deeply ingrained in American life that thinking about it can leave one with sheer despair. Blacks suffer from blackness, or more accurately, from what the dominant society makes of blackness. And where the heritage of Christian enmity toward the Jews seems gradually to have weakened over the decades, more or less in accordance with the weakening of Christianity itself, I don't see how anyone could speak of an equivalent weakening of the phobias held in regard to the blacks—except, happily, among a portion of white students.

If, then, one accepts the criticisms I have thus far made of Halpern's thesis, one must also modify his view of where the two minorities stand in relation to each other. I share his distaste for those Jewish "radicals" who behave as if only through ethnic self-hatred can they prove their solidarity with the blacks, but I see no reason to doubt the view which sometimes triggers or rationalizes this self-hatred, namely, that the situation of the blacks in the United States is not really comprehensible through the analytic categories used in discussing ethnic minorities. Again, to say this doesn't at all minimize the validity of self-defense when Jewish interests or values are seriously attacked. But there has to be some sense of proportion as to the relation between their agonies and our discomforts. Where, as in our fears for the survival of Israel, we have agonies too, then (as in Shlomo Katz's recent "Open Letter to James Baldwin") we have the right and duty to insist upon our needs and measures.

It is in light of my qualifications of Halpern's argument that I'd propose that his tacit plea for a strengthening of Jewish communal identity be—not dismissed, but—modulated. Most Jews do not feel themselves radically ill-treated or radically ill-at-ease in the United States, and insofar as this refers to their condition as Jews rather than as workers or professionals or women or draftees, I think they are right. Yet neither do they feel themselves completely at ease in the United States, and again this feeling seems justified. Their inclination toward liberalism, no matter what criticisms may be offered of one or another practical consequence, results from a collective apprehension of where they stand in the United States. They believe that, by and large, their security and well-being is best served by liberal advance, and apart from the fact that such a belief does them some moral credit, I think it rests on a reasonably accurate perception of social realities. Let us also remember that this attachment to liberalism is not only a mark of Jewish consolidation within the society, it is also a historical conquest, a sign of readiness to think in terms of fraternity and compassion. Much as socialists like myself would wish to see this commitment made more vital through an infusion of radical content, it continues to be, when all is said and done, a contribution to American life. We should not hurry to abandon it.

Perhaps we should proceed to qualify it. There are situations, mostly local ones, in which the Jews ought to act once again as a coherent community, fairly well-disciplined and striking back very hard against anyone who dares whisper anti-Semitism. In some sense, hasn't this sort of on-again, off-again strategy begun to be improvised—that in our roles as citizens who are Jews we act as best we can by our individual perceptions of political need and that in our roles as Jews who are citizens we try to defend our distinctive interests? No doubt, it is easier to say than do this; but the same would hold for a proposed reversion to a strategy that stresses ethnic discipline. (I leave aside the fact that any attempt at such a strategy is almost certain to fail.)

To clarify what has just been said, let us come back to the Brandeis incident. Halpern is right in saying that a university like Brandeis—one that is Jewish-sponsored—has an obligation to insist that no department, autonomous or not, become a focus for anti-Semitism. But then the same is or should be true for *any* university, so that Jewish professors were justified in stressing the general argument as to academic propriety, quite apart from a distinctive Jewish interest. My guess is that Halpern's dismay is directed against those faculty members who hesitated to make the argument on either Jewish interest or academic propriety, because they wished to show their sympathies for the black students.

In his valid argument that there was a distinct Jewish interest at Brandeis, and his equally valid implication that the Brandeis affair was merely a small instance of a large problem, Halpern underestimates the significance of the universalist case against the proposals of the black students. Or, to be more fair, he is just not as interested in that matter. Yet precisely because Brandeis is a Jewish-sponsored school, and a new one at that, some of its faculty must have felt a special need—I think they were right—for presenting their views not merely in terms of the Jewish interest but also out of a wish to make clear that they wanted Brandeis to be *a university*.

Halpern writes that once "a black-studies department had been worked out to the satisfaction of Negroes and Jews, the question of formulating the agreement in terms consonant with existing academic procedures would never have become an issue dividing them." Can he be certain? Were there not also at stake general academic values, far more important than his phrase "existing academic procedures" can indicate? And might not such an agreement have caused distress to some non-Jewish faculty members at Brandeis who, despite the terms worked out by the two minorities, could have felt that a major academic interest was being sacrificed? Conflicts between minorities often cannot be separated, nor should they be, from a concern for the values of universalist liberalism.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Finally, I think that Halpern accepts too readily certain stereotypes of the American black community, pretty much those advanced by the New Left intellectuals he dislikes. Such stereotypes, to be sure, can more readily be accepted if one spends one's time on the campus than if one gets around in the outer world, for the notion that the black community is onto a nationalist-revolutionary phase makes more sense in regard to student groups than it does to the masses of Harlem or the South Side of Chicago. And at this point Halpern's sharpness of insight deserts him, for he seems simply to assume that we must expect a continued upsurge of anti-Semitism from mass movements of nationalist-revolutionary blacks. Perhaps that will turn out to be the case, but so far the instances of black anti-Semitism, painful as they have been, seem largely to have been confined to small sects. Those of us alert to the divisions within the Jewish world ought to be ready to suppose that there are at least as many divisions within the black world. The image of a unified black community, charged with nationalist-revolutionary passion, simply does not correspond to reality. And if Ben Halpern were to deny holding any such image, I could only say in reply that it does frequently appear in his book.

CONFLICTS between Jews and blacks there surely will be, and these conflicts may be expected to worsen as the conditions of our cities worsen. We may suppose that Jews and blacks in some local situations will have to go their separate ways, and sometimes come head-on in collision. Yet on a national scale the case for a limited but sustained cooperation still makes a lot of sense. If Halpern is right in saying that a major problem for the blacks will be the persistence of a lumpenproletariat, then the idea of restitution, advanced rather fecklessly by some groups but meriting a more serious expression, must come into play. The social demoralization among portions of the black community is surely due, in one or another part, to the historical traumas to which blacks have been subjected in this country, and it therefore becomes not merely a social necessity but also a moral obligation for the society at large, which in practice means the federal government, to provide generously the means for coping with this problem. For the blacks, support for large-scale federal aid to the cities is a matter of self-interest; for the Jews, it is both a token of their commitment to liberalism and partly a matter of self-interest. Here, to an extent overshadowing probable local conflicts, is the place where a persistent Jewish devotion to universalist liberalism, given a new and more combative edge, could allow for both self-assertion and at least a partial alliance with the blacks.

It would even be good for the country.

Joe McCarthy (Revisited)

THE NIGHTMARE DECADE. By FRED J. COOK. *Random House. 614 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by DAVID M. OSHINSKY

"THERE is a new generation of young Americans, many of whom have only the vaguest ideas about Joseph R. McCarthy and what the McCarthyism of the 1950's represented." Here, unwittingly encapsulated in the opening sentence of Fred J. Cook's *The Nightmare Decade,* is evidence of the book's major drawback: its excessive reliance upon, and often startling similarity to, the standard McCarthy works of the past twenty years. In 1966, for example, Earl Latham began his scholarly account of the McCarthy era, *The Communist Controversy in Washington,* by noting: "There is a new generation of people who have no memory of the tensions about Communism in the years from the confrontation of Hiss and Chambers to the condemnation of Senator McCarthy. . . ." Is it simply coincidental that two prominent researchers, working independently, would open their manuscripts in such a similar fashion? Perhaps too much has already been written about McCarthy; perhaps every new idea, every new phrase, is at least vaguely reminiscent of a past one.

If this were the case, however, Cook's shallow, tiresome book could easily be explained in terms of the overexposure of its subject. But in fact there is still much to be learned about the enigmatic McCarthy. Historians know very little about the Senator's early years; and those who have studied his later career in great detail are by no means agreed on his motivations and ambitions. Unfortunately, Cook has little to add to our understanding of these matters. In fact, for this "major new biography of Senator McCarthy" he did not interview a single individual; he also seems to have ignored the valuable manuscript collections, state and local newspapers, campaign material and financial reports on file at the Wisconsin State Historical Society, as well as a multitude of academic studies dealing with McCarthy's life and career. In short, he has given us a cut-and-paste effort based largely upon a few well-known secondary sources.

Cook's description of the first forty-odd years of McCarthy's life is taken almost exclusively from a single book, *McCarthy: The Man, The Senator, The 'Ism,* by Jack Anderson and Ronald May. Written almost two decades ago, this valuable work provides a detailed summary of the Senator's early career; in Cook's hands, however, it becomes an overworked tool from which every conceivable story, fact, and anecdote is carefully gleaned. From Anderson and May, for example, we learn that McCarthy was born "in an eight-room, white clapboard house on the 142-acre McCarthy farm, located in Grand Chute Township . . . near the north shore of Lake Winnebago"; as a boy, "Big-chested and short-armed, he reminded his brothers of a cub bear and they took pleasure in telling him so." Compare Cook who tells us that McCarthy was born "in an eight-room, white clapboard house located on a 142-acre worn-out farm in Grand Chute Township near the north shore of Lake Winnebago"; as a

DAVID M. OSHINSKY, *a new contributor, teaches American history at Douglass College, Rutgers University.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

boy, "Barrel-chested with short, heavy arms, he resembled nothing so much as a bear cub and his older brothers . . . took delight in ridiculing him."

Anderson and May describe McCarthy, the college boxer, as "a wild slugger who would rush out of his corner at the first sound of the bell. . . . Even when he was against the ropes with blood dripping and both eyes blackened he kept smiling. . . ." Again compare Cook who describes McCarthy, the college boxer, as "a wild slugger" who "at the sound of the bell . . . would rush from his corner. . . . Backed up against the ropes, both eyes blackened, blood dripping from his slashed face, he would wave his gloves and taunt, 'Come on! come on!' "

Other phrases and anecdotes, just as disturbingly close to the earlier work, are scattered throughout *The Nightmare Decade*. Thus when discussing McCarthy's 1946 Senatorial campaign against Robert LaFollette, Jr., Anderson and May recall an interesting political ploy—the handwritten note:

> A half million of these popped up in the mailboxes of Wisconsinites bearing the message: "Dear———: Your vote Tuesday will be greatly appreciated by Joe McCarthy." The last two words of the message were dropped to the bottom of the page to simulate McCarthy's personal signature, even though it was signed by hundreds of different hands.

Now Cook on the same incident:

> . . . some half-million postcards flooded the mails, reaching virtually every voter in Wisconsin. The salutation was personal: "Dear———," followed by this message: "Your vote Tuesday will be greatly appreciated by Joe McCarthy." The McCarthy name was dropped down to the bottom of the note and handwritten to simulate his signature. Hundreds of different hands signed the name. . . .

And, as a final example, when considering Senator McCarthy's role in the public-housing furor of the late 1940's, Cook crudely paraphrases a complicated statement from the New York *Post* (quoted directly in Anderson and May), without indicating that the passage is not his own. The original *Post* paragraph states:

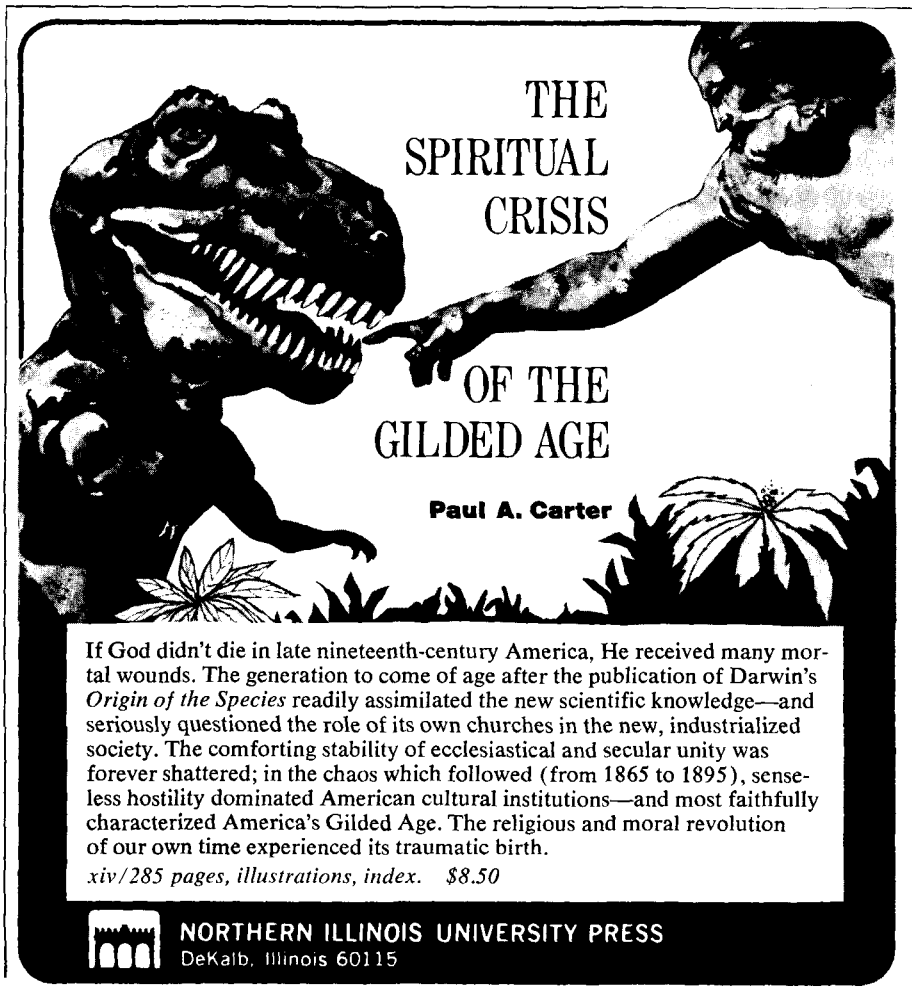
> With a Senator like Flanders who spoke in broad philosophical terms, McCarthy would interrupt repeatedly to ask his impression of the meaning of some words on the fifth line of page 27, offering revisions, modifications, and corrections of his own, until Flanders was dizzy. Then he would purringly sympathize with Flanders for not knowing what the measure was all about. With a Senator like Sparkman who understood the technicalities of the bill, McCarthy would resort to rhetorical broadsides about "socialism."

Here is Cook:

> With a proponent of the bill like the mild-mannered Flanders, he would interrupt, asking for interpretations of obscure paragraphs and offering modifications of his own until Flanders became lost in the maze. McCarthy would then sympathize with him, a purr in his voice, for not being able to understand so complicated a measure. With a true housing expert like Alabama's Senator John Sparkman, McCarthy did not attempt such obfuscation, but would interrupt to fire oratorical broadsides about the dangers of such "socialistic" legislation.

But Cook's uncritical reliance on secondary sources proves ultimately self-defeating. Since he leans almost totally on Anderson and May for his analysis of McCarthy's formative years, he must accept at face value the validity of hundreds of facts and anecdotes, some of which have been seriously questioned by other historians. In addition, he opens himself to many glaring factual errors and gross oversimplifications.

For example, when describing the LaFollettes of Wisconsin he writes that they "had originally been Republicans, but Fighting Bob, finding his party ruled by a dynasty of selfish and corrupt business interests, had been compelled to go outside the organization to


THE
SPIRITUAL
CRISIS
OF THE
GILDED AGE
Paul A. Carter
If God didn't die in late nineteenth-century America, He received many mortal wounds. The generation to come of age after the publication of Darwin's *Origin of the Species* readily assimilated the new scientific knowledge—and seriously questioned the role of its own churches in the new, industrialized society. The comforting stability of ecclesiastical and secular unity was forever shattered; in the chaos which followed (from 1865 to 1895), senseless hostility dominated American cultural institutions—and most faithfully characterized America's Gilded Age. The religious and moral revolution of our own time experienced its traumatic birth.
xiv/285 pages, illustrations, index. $8.50
NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY PRESS
DeKalb, Illinois 60115

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

achieve much needed reforms. He had organized the Wisconsin Progressive party, and he and his sons, Robert and Philip, had run as Progressives. . . ."

In fact, however, Fighting Bob LaFollette never organized the Wisconsin Progressive party. He died in 1925, and this new organization was not formed until 1934. The elder LaFollette, while campaigning for the Presidency on an Independent Progressive ticket in 1924, never strayed from the state Republican party. Some nine years after his death, his two sons organized the Wisconsin Progressive party; and their primary reason for doing so was not to thwart "a dynasty of selfish and corrupt business interests," but rather to insure their future political success. For during the New Deal years, as Leon Epstein has noted in *Politics in Wisconsin*, the GOP was "simply not the party for a family accustomed to winning office." In forming the WPP, the brothers carefully initiated a strong working alliance with the Roosevelt administration, an alliance made possible by the fact that the LaFollettes were no longer Republicans.

Cook also sets forth a distorted interpretation of the LaFollette-McCarthy campaign of 1946 when he asserts that "the final turning edge in LaFollette's defeat was supplied by the Communists. . . ." As he tells it, "Young Bob" delivered a major foreign-policy address before the Senate in May 1945—condemning Soviet aggression and questioning the UN's ability to solve world problems—which infuriated large segments of the Communist-dominated Wisconsin CIO. To even the score, "in the weeks before the election, the Wisconsin edition of the *CIO News* . . . brainwashed union members with a barrage of anti-LaFollette propaganda. A series of headlines blasted away: "UNION CALLS LAFOLLETTE ATTACK A BETRAYAL, BLASTS LAFOLLETTE PLEA FOR TOLERANCE TOWARD NAZI GERMANY, FASCIST LEADERS." To begin with, Cook fails to mention that LaFollette's speech was condemned not only by Communists, but also by most important editorial organs in Wisconsin. The liberal Milwaukee *Journal* said the Senator was "sabotaging the work being done at San Francisco" in order to "enthrone the isolationism which became so tragic a failure after the First World War," while the conservative Wisconsin *State Journal* wrote that ". . . probably the major reasons in Russia's sometime lone-wolf role are . . . performances like Senator LaFollette's which still draw alarming applause." Secondly, if Cook had bothered to check the original sources, instead of relying on secondary material, he would have discovered that the two headlines he quoted were published on June 11 and June 18, 1945—*fourteen months* before primary election day. Indeed, during the last three months of the campaign, the Wisconsin *CIO News* made only two significant references to the Senator. Its major concern, in fact, was not LaFollette, but rather a local politician named Edmund Burrowicz who, as an official of the Communist-dominated Fur and Leather Workers, was trying to unseat a conservative Democratic representative from Milwaukee's Fourth Congressional District.

SENATOR MCCARTHY's glory years—the four years following his incredible speech in Wheeling, West Virginia in 1950—are more carefully described in *The Nightmare Decade*. But again, Cook tells us little that we didn't already know. We learn that McCarthy was virtually spoon-fed the Communist subversion issue at a dinner engagement with three Catholic friends at Washington's Colony restaurant; that his performance before the U.S. Senate on the evening of February 20, 1950 was an "outrageous" con job matched only by his masterful testimony before the Tydings Committee; that his accusations against Dorothy Kenyon, Philip Jessup, and Owen Lattimore did "incalculable harm" to the nation and its institutions; that an elated and rejuvenated Republican party, sensing McCarthy's power after the political defeat of Millard Tydings, rewarded him with one of the most powerful committee appointments in the Senate; that

AN AMERICAN INDIAN CHILD NEEDS YOU AS A SPONSOR AND PERSONAL FRIEND...

A friend to help. A friend to write to. A friend to share his—or her—joy as a young life is transformed from appalling hardship to bright new hope and pride—because of your compassion.

Sponsoring an American Indian child through Futures For Children can work many wonders:

- Keep "your child" in school by directly financing shoes, clothing, and other necessities. (Right now many Indian children have little more than the threadbare clothes on their backs.)
- Open a new world "beyond the reservation" for your child through your concerned friendship.
- Provide hope, self-esteem and confidence—perhaps for the first time in a child's life.

Decide now to sponsor a young Indian boy or girl. It will be a rewarding experience for your entire family.

FUTURES FOR CHILDREN
5612 Parkston Road,
Washington, D.C. 20016

☐ Yes, I (we) want to sponsor an American Indian child . . .
☐ a boy ☐ a girl ☐ either

Enclosed is a check for $_____
($15 monthly; $45 quarterly; $90 semi-annually; $180 annually)

☐ Here's help, not as a Sponsor, but with a check for $_____

☐ Please send more information.

Name _____

Address _____

City- State -Zip _____ CO-10-71

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

few men in public life had the guts to confront the McCarthy issue. Yet neither the story nor the way Cook presents it is new, as a quick glance at the writings of Richard Rovere, Eric Goldman, Earl Latham, and many others will easily attest.

There is one theme in Cook's account, however, which merits additional attention. This is that Joseph McCarthy "pulled together more successfully than any other politician in our history all the elements of an incipient American fascism." According to Cook, the Senator himself was "for the most part in the game for kicks. . . . He reveled in the uproar he created, but seemed to lack any coherent or serious national purpose." But unlike other demagogues, who "threatened rather than served the purposes of the big business-press-religious complex that forms the nation's Establishment . . . Joe McCarthy . . . was useful to those forces—useful because he had the ability to induce a popular frenzy against the liberal elements his backers feared."

Cook begins his discussion of this thesis with an analysis of the role of the press during the McCarthy era. He notes, quite correctly, that the Senator's "image as the champion of pure Americanism" came in large measure from Colonel McCormick of the Chicago *Tribune*, the Hearst and Scripps-Howard newspaper chains, and assorted right-wing cranks like Gerald L. K. Smith and Upton Close. But whether these sources represent anything close to the "press Establishment," is a matter open to serious doubt. In this connection it should be remembered that in 1952, at the height of McCarthy's power, the Senator was being vehemently attacked by, among other papers and magazines, the New York *Times*, the New York *Post*, the New York *Herald-Tribune*, the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, the Washington *Post*, the Milwaukee *Journal*, *Time*, *Life*, *Newsweek*, the *New Yorker*, *Harper's*, the *Nation* and the *New Republic*.

The same criticism can be applied to Cook's description of pro-McCarthy sentiment within the "religious Establishment"—most notably the Catholic Church. He strings together two or three anecdotes with a couple of quotes from Cardinal Spellman, and then asserts that the Senator "was anointed by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church." What Cook overlooks, however, is that the hierarchy was represented not only by the Spellmans but also by the Bishop Sheils, and the Catholic intellectual community included not only the Buckleys and Bozells, but also the gentlemen who wrote for *Commonweal*. Furthermore, while most sociological studies and opinion polls showed Catholics to be more pro-McCarthy than non-Catholics, religion was no more significant in determining support for McCarthy than factors pertaining to level of education or type of occupation. Indeed, my own study of the voting patterns of Polish Catholics in Milwaukee's working-class wards during the 1952 elections—a group allegedly ripe for McCarthy's hysterical anti-Communist appeal—showed the Senator receiving only 28 per cent of the ballots cast, while every other Republican on the ticket garnered at least 38 per cent.

The final member of Cook's tripartite Establishment is big business which allegedly backed McCarthy's crusade to the hilt. He notes that "it has become fashionable to belittle McCarthy's appeal to those of big money as a matter of little consequence involving only a few crackpot millionaires. It is a delusional view." Yet of the six millionaires he cites to prove his point—Joseph Kennedy, Colonel McCormick, and Texas oilmen H. L. Hunt, Hugh Roy Cullen, Clint Murchison, and Sid Richardson—at least five, and possibly all six, could be considered political "crackpots." Actually, the facts indicate that most top corporate executives and successful businessmen feared rather than respected McCarthy. As sociologists and political scientists have long noted, the majority of the business community viewed McCarthyism as a dangerous mass movement designed to upset the existing status hierarchy. This is quite obvious from both public-opinion polls and the editorial comments of publications like *Business Week*, *Fortune*, and the *Wall Street Journal*.

In reality, McCarthy's greatest source of moral (and possibly financial) support came from the small businessman who felt himself being rendered virtually impotent as an effective social or political force in modern America by the growth of large corporations, massive industrial unions, and a highly centralized federal bureaucracy. The small businessman tended to identify with politicians who attacked the institutions which were destroying old-style living patterns and Joseph McCarthy was just such a politician. He challenged the largest and most impersonal organizations in America—the State Department, the Army, and, at times, a few of the nation's great industrial and journalistic enterprises—thereby making himself in a certain sense the hero of the little man, his ally in cutting down to size the well-dressed, well-educated, self-assured managers of modern society.

In short, Cook's book is—to use the kindest epithet—derivative rather than first-hand and crudely ideological rather than scholarly in its approach. Accordingly, it provides us with no help in trying to assess the true meaning of McCarthyism and its impact on our population and on our political institutions.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Next business trip to Europe, take your best asset with you.

She'll love you for it.

Last time in Europe you missed something—your wife. This time, wouldn't you like her to share the fun, too?

While you're busy working, she'll find plenty to do—theatre-going, exploring boutiques, fashion houses, even holiday shopping.

Well, now's the perfect time to take her. The tourists have gone. So have high season prices. And Pan Am presents some irresistible new bargains:

The Double Bonus Escape

1. Luxurious Inter·Continental Hotels will give you and your wife a reserved suite or double room (best available) in any one of 15 hotels in Western Europe, for the superior single-room rate.

Stay Tuesday through Friday, and you'll both get Saturday night on the house. Your company is probably paying for the hotel anyway; that means your wife stays absolutely free. You both get a bonus weekend!

2. Pan Am passengers can also get 1 out of every 5 days, free, when they rent an Avis car in major Western European cities. Choose your car and pay only for gas and mileage.

In Paris for example, the Double Bonus Escape can amount to an added value of more than $350 over a 5-day period.

Call Pan Am® or your Pan Am Travel Agent to arrange your Double Bonus Escape.* It's available only through PANAMAC®, our worldwide computer system. Reserve your flight, hotel and car in one easy step.

We fly direct to more European cities, with more 747s than anybody else. Our 41 European offices are at your service.

Before you go, pick up some recorded Pan Am Tours on Tape to help you enjoy your trip. Cassettes $2.95 each.

Escape with us to Europe. And make business a pleasure.

Something new from the world's most experienced airline.

Pan Am

Autumn Escape Plan

*Effective November 1 through March 31.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(the rumor)

"There's a rumor going around that Hunt-Wesson Foods is owned by a gentleman from Texas named Hunt.

This is not true. Hunt-Wesson Foods is a part of Norton Simon, Incorporated. We're located in Fullerton, California. And our only business is trying to make the best food products we know how.

If someone tells you anything different, please tell them who we really are.

We'd appreciate it."

Edward Gelsthorpe

Edward Gelsthorpe
President of
Hunt-Wesson Foods

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The living Cutty Sark.

Cutty Sark, greatest of the clipper ships, still lives at Greenwich, England. Since 1957, when she was opened as a memorial to Britain's merchant seamen, over 4 million people have walked her decks, marveled at her fantastic display of clipper era memorabilia and tried, if only for a moment, to experience the magic of the days of wooden ships and iron men.

Cutty Sark's cutty sark. *Cutty* wore, atop her mainmast, this gilded replica of the short skirt that gave her her name. It was lost off Africa in 1916, discovered some 40 years later in London. Today, back aboard, it's one of *Cutty Sark's* proudest relics.

Cutty's latest Master, Capt. D. Reid, 36 years at sea, full of yarns about *Cutty Sark* and his own days as a sail and steam Master in the Far East trade.

The Long John Silver figurehead collection, the last remains of over 100 famous merchantmen and only one of the many clipper era exhibits on view aboard *Cutty Sark*.

***Cutty Sark's* century-old reputation** is honored by the Scots whisky that took her name. For generations, Cutty Sark has blended only Scotland's best whiskies to create the exceptional Cutty Sark taste... and the character only Cutty Sark can offer. Cutty Sark. It stands alone. You'll know why.

Cutty Sark...the only one of its kind.

For exact replica of antique 3-pint "Liverpool" Cutty Sark pitcher, send check or money order for $4.95 to: Cutty Sark Pitcher, P.O. Box 56, New York, N.Y. 10046. Offer void where prohibited.

The Buckingham Corporation, Importers, New York, N.Y. Distilled and Bottled in Scotland. Blended 86 Proof.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED